

**BX**

8724

W584S4

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

BX 8724

Chap. \_\_\_\_\_ Copyright No. \_\_\_\_\_

Shelf. W58454

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Deposited November 15<sup>th</sup> 1850  
Recorded Vol. 25, Page 503.

No. 132

1875  
No. 1000

1875



# 中國通商口岸

李鴻章奏請開辦通商口岸

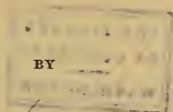
光緒二十一年

李鴻章奏請開辦通商口岸

光緒二十一年

李鴻章奏請開辦通商口岸

# SERMONS



SAMUEL WORCESTER,

MINISTER OF THE NEW CHURCH;

WHO WAS BORN IN THORNTON, N.H., AUG. 31, 1793; AND WHO DIED IN BRIDGEWATER, MASS.

DEC. 25, 1844.

17

1872

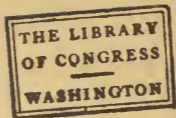
---

BOSTON:

OTIS CLAPP, 23, SCHOOL STREET.

1851.

Bx 8724  
. W58454



---

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1850, by  
SARAH WORCESTER,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

---

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON,

No. 21, School-street.



# C O N T E N T S.

---

## S E R M O N I.

	Page
LOVE OF REPUTATION. John v. 44 . . . . .	1

### II.

AFFLICTIONS. Rev. iii. 19 . . . . .	13
-------------------------------------	----

### III.

SICKNESS. Ps. cxix. 71 . . . . .	24
----------------------------------	----

### IV.

THE HEAT AND LIGHT OF THE HOLY CITY. Rev. xxi. 23.	38
--	----

### V.

APPEARANCES OF TRUTH. 1 Kings xix. 11, 12 . . . . .	51
---	----

### VI.

COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD LAY. Matt. xxviii. 1—6 . . . . .	63
--	----

### VII.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER. Matt. xiii. 1—9 . . . . .	76
---	----

### VIII.

WHY THE LORD SPAKE IN PARABLES. Matt. xiii. 10—17 . . . . .	92
---	----

IX.		Page
THE PARABLE OF THE TARES OF THE FIELD.	Matt.	
xiii. 24—30 . . . . .		109
X.		
THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD-SEED.	Matt. xiii. 31, 32 . . . . .	126
XI.		
PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.	Matt. xiii. 33—36 . . . . .	140
XII.		
THE TREASURE HID IN A FIELD.	Matt. xiii. 44 . . . . .	154
XIII.		
THE MERCHANT SEEKING PEARLS.	Matt. xiii. 45, 46 . . . . .	170
XIV.		
THE NET CAST INTO THE SEA.	Matt. xiii. 47—50 . . . . .	183
XV.		
THE SCRIBE INSTRUCTED INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.		
Matt. xiii. 51, 52 . . . . .		196
XVI.		
RECEPTION OF TRUTH WITH THE NATURAL.	Matt. xiii.	
53—58 . . . . .		208

## SERMON I.

---

### LOVE OF REPUTATION.

John v. 44. — HOW CAN YE BELIEVE WHO RECEIVE HONOR ONE OF ANOTHER, AND SEEK NOT THE HONOR WHICH IS FROM THE LORD ALONE ?

THE word which is here rendered “ honor ” is more commonly rendered *glory*. In the twelfth chapter of John it is rendered *praise*, where it is said of the rulers, that they did not confess the Lord, because they loved the *praise* of men more than the *praise* of God.

The natural man is not content with having others think of him and estimate him according to his true quality or just deserts ; but he constantly seeks to be reputed as wiser, better, and more useful than he is. He seeks such a kind of reputation as will best promote his selfish and worldly ends, and he calls that a good reputation. Many natural men wish to be thought truly religious men ; but they desire this reputation, only that it may aid them in accomplishing such selfish and worldly purposes as their hearts are devoted to. They seek to appear righteous to men, but not to be internally righteous ; and, if they were placed among persons who had no regard for

even external religion, they would have no love of being esteemed religious. Even when religious life is in some degree honorable, we see that natural men have an aversion to doing such things as would give them the reputation of being righteous: they seldom perform these things fully, but only enough to meet their own views of prudence; and this has not regard to what is approved by angels and the Lord, but to what is highly esteemed among men.

The angels look on the interior thoughts and affections of men, and not on their words and actions. The Lord looks on man's inmost love, and thence on the operations of his mind and body. When man's internal principles are good, he has glory, honor, or a good reputation with the Lord and the angels. Man is said to be praised, honored, or approved by the Lord, when he internally approves, honors, and loves what is of the Lord. When he receives, acknowledges, loves, and brings forth the Lord's good and truth, then he honors the Lord; and then also the Lord is said to give him honor, for he then does what the Lord loves to have him do, and approves of his doing.

He who seeks this honor of the Lord has respect to being a good man, rather than to being so esteemed. His attention is directed, not principally to what man looks upon, but to his internal principles, which the Lord regards. He seeks to have true thoughts and good loves, and to have these directed to what is spiritually and eternally useful. He is little solicitous merely to please any person on earth, even the most intimate friend; but his object

is to do what will be spiritually useful to others, or what they ought to be pleased with, and what they will be pleased with when they love good and truth. He seeks not honor from men, but seeks to do them good. And, if they honor him for his usefulness, he refers this honor wholly to the Lord; knowing and confessing, that the will and the power to do the good were of the Lord alone.

The text implies, that those who receive honor one of another cannot believe the divine truths. Why this is so, is the next object of inquiry.

The divine truths teach man to forsake all that he hath, that he may become the Lord's disciple. They teach him that he must have no temporal interests that shall be the primary motives of his conduct, but must seek first the kingdom of God and his justice. Thus they teach him, that he must have no connections and alliances with men which will obligate them to serve him, and him to serve them, except so far as such service will conduce to their spiritual welfare.

As the divine truths teach these things, they require a state of mind wholly incompatible with seeking honor one of another, — a state in which man will have respect to what is in itself right, and not what man may approve and applaud. And, therefore, he who looks outward to what men will commend, and acts for the sake of their approbation and favor, cannot be in a state to receive and believe the truths which teach him how to live a heavenly life.

That kind of belief in the divine truths which is meant in the text is a practical belief, — such a belief

as is accompanied by doing the truths. A merely speculative belief is entertained by some, while they seek honor one of another. And such persons often suppose themselves to be real believers; but a little observation is generally sufficient to show that they are deficient in genuine faith. They are unwilling to confess and establish the divine truths as the rules of their conduct; and they seek a good reputation by other means than by doing the divine truths.

They also judge one another to be good, respectable, and honorable men, by the degree in which they conform to common principles of moral and civil life, and not by the degree in which they forsake all, and follow the Lord.

When men receive spiritual truths and make them the principles of their lives, their views of what is honorable, reputable, or respectable, undergo an essential change. Those seem to them honorable who keep the commandments, and thus honor the Lord. That any are highly esteemed amongst men, or have a high opinion of themselves, does not indicate to a spiritual man that they are truly respectable. Judging from the divine truths, he calls none respectable who have not such respect for the divine truths as to do them. They who seek the honor which cometh of the Lord alone, seek it by doing whatsoever the Lord commands them; and they call others honorable or respectable in proportion as they do the same. They who seek any other kind of honor or respectability, seek it by doing what seems to them to promote their object; and they esteem others honorable or respectable in proportion as they

live in like manner. Thus an essential distinction exists between two classes of men in respect to what is honorable, respectable, or commendable ; and this difference is as great as the difference between the honor which is of men, and the honor which is of the Lord alone.

Those who desire to receive honor one of another are displeased when they do not receive it ; but they who seek honor of the Lord are concerned only that others should also honor Him. They who seek the honor which is of the Lord, cannot render honor to others for any thing but keeping the commandments ; and this is not satisfactory to those who receive honor one of another. They desire to be at least as much honored as those who do the truth ; and when distinction is made between them and the doers of the truth, by which their own deficiencies are manifested and marked, they feel dishonored, and complain of ill-treatment. They claim the rights and privileges and honors that are externally awarded to doers of the truth, without doing it.

They who seek the honor which is of God alone, cannot account any belief genuine which does not become practical ; but those who receive honor one of another think themselves entitled to be honored as believers, while they hear the Lord's sayings and do them not. At the present day, the latter class are the majority ; and the character of the majority generally determines what shall be regarded as reputable. They decline going any farther in their faith than they can go and still receive honor one of another, and devote themselves principally to worldly

life. They will receive only so much truth as they can use as their self-intelligence.

We know from the Word, that, wherever the truth is taught, there are many who reject it wholly, or fail of confessing and doing it, because they love the praise of men more than the praise of God. They will not renounce that life which is in itself opposed to the divine truth; and therefore they cannot cease to desire honor from the opposers of the truth. They cannot esteem it honorable, but they regard it as exceedingly degrading, to become as little children, and call the Lord, Father, and the Church, Mother. And, as all truths which are taught in the church are designed and adapted to lead them into this state, therefore they cannot believe. They cannot believe what is so derogatory to their self-intelligence and the self-intelligence of others, and the honor which is based on a life of self-intelligence. They cannot believe what calls nothing honorable, reputable, or respectable, but having the Lord's commandments and keeping them.

Those who have been much accustomed to receive honor one of another find it very difficult, as they advance in religious life, to put away the desire for this honor; and it requires great watchfulness and self-denial to avoid seeking it, and to avoid being elated by it when it is rendered them. If they will carefully observe the tendencies of their affections, they will sometimes discover that they choose as companions, or are most devoted to, those who are in the habit of praising them or flattering them. They will also discover, that, when they have done



any good thing, they are not quite satisfied with seeing that it is useful ; and that they seek by various arts to draw from others expressions of commendation.

There are also many, who, perceiving that they gain favor with others by flattering them, are accustomed to applaud their words and deeds to gain their favor. The common conversation in parties and among intimate friends is so full of this flattery, that any one who should shun it would be regarded as wanting in one of the essentials of politeness. And the sin of flattery, and of the love of being flattered, is not limited to things of an external, worldly character. We hear men applauded for their piety, their self-denial, their spiritual wisdom, and their charity ; and there can be no doubt that many, when they are praised for these things, love and appropriate the honor, and fail of rendering it to the Lord.

Let us endeavor to understand more fully the nature and extent of this sin. Suppose that you have said or done something that is useful, and some one in a flattering manner commends you for it. If you said or did it for the sake of fame, honor, gain, or any evil end, his flattering approbation gives success and increase to your evil. It also does much to make you think that you are as wise or good as you pretended to be. It also encourages you to continue to do so from the same evil motives. But, if what you said or did was from a good motive, the flattery makes you, or tends to make you, ascribe the truth or good to yourself, and thus steal it

from the Lord. By this means, the truth or good which you had received from the Lord, and which you had honestly brought forth to do good, and which would thus have been appropriated as spiritual life, ceases to be true or good in you, because you ascribe it to yourself. The flattery turns away your mind from the Lord, and from the truth or good as from Him, and directs the thoughts and affections to yourself and your own merit.

What greater evil can be done to you, than to cause you to ascribe to yourself what is of the Lord? This is the direct tendency of flattery, and this shows how great a sin it is to give or receive flattery.

While bringing forth good and truth, and ascribing them to the Lord, there is an internal perception that it is right to do so, and hence that it is pleasing to heaven and the Lord. This perception is given by the Lord; and he who has it has all the honor that he desires from heaven and the Lord. But this honor is lost, the moment a man suffers himself to be flattered. When he receives the praise of men, he loses the praise of God; and, when he has stolen the divine truth, by ascribing it, or the good of it, to himself, he loses the capacity of believing it as truth from the Lord. His mind is closed towards the Lord, and opened only towards himself and his flatterers; and then he can have no genuine faith in the truth. "How can ye believe who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor which is of God alone?"

There is reason to believe, that many are kept in a merely natural state by the habit of receiving honor

one of another, and that the spiritual progress of those who are in the process of regeneration is greatly hindered by suffering themselves to retain this sin.

There is, however, a kind and degree of approbation due from men to every one who is a medium of good and truth from the Lord. Little children, especially, should always be made to understand whether what they do is agreeable or disagreeable to their parents and teachers. They should not be so praised and flattered as to make them vain and conceited. But as the Lord gives to his children to know what is right and what is wrong, and gives them a perception of his approbation when they do their duty, so parents and teachers should do to those intrusted to their care. They cannot otherwise know when they are doing right, nor enjoy the proper happiness of doing right; nor can they know when they are doing wrong, nor suffer, to rebuke and restrain them, the proper misery of doing wrong.

A similar kind, though a less degree, of approbation for right conduct, and disapprobation for wrong conduct, is necessary from masters to servants, and from rulers to subjects. But, in some cases, as there is little need of approbation for good conduct, there is the greater need of disapprobation for bad conduct. But, in all cases, he who endeavors to do the will of another is entitled to know whether he succeeds. He needs this for his direction, encouragement, and happiness; and he who withholds it is a tyrant.

So also some acknowledgment of what we receive from the Lord through any medium is due to that medium. The medium should not be praised for it

as if it were of him ; but he should be acknowledged, loved, and honored as a medium ; and the acknowledgment, love, and honor should be in proportion to the importance of his office, and his fidelity in fulfilling his duties.

This acknowledgment, love, and honor are rendered principally by thankfully receiving through him what the Lord imparts, and making such use of it as the Lord intends. We make proper acknowledgments to our rulers, when we do what we can to support them in their offices, and obey the laws which they make or execute. We make a good acknowledgment to those who teach us truth, when we sustain them in their functions, are attentive to learn truth from them, and are prompt and faithful in doing it. We make a suitable acknowledgment to all who do us good, when we gladly receive that good, impart it to others, do them good according to their qualities and offices, and ascribe all the good to the Lord.

When any one receives good or truth from another, and does not acknowledge, love, and honor him as the medium of it, it is scarcely possible for him who receives it to avoid ascribing it to himself. And this is stealing both from the Lord and the neighbor. And, if we carefully consider this matter, it will appear that we cannot acknowledge, love, and honor the Lord as the source of any good or truth, without acknowledging, loving, and honoring the medium of it. And hence it is found, when the Lord has imparted many goods and truths through any medium, that those who have failed to do their duty

to that medium have failed in the same degree to receive those goods and truths in such a manner as to receive life from them. "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me."

Those who render this honor which is due to those who are mediums of the divine blessings, do not receive honor one of another, but seek the honor which is of God alone. They honor these mediums as the Lord's mediums, and they intend it as honor to the Lord; and each one that receives it should render it to the Lord. When this is the case, there flows in from the Lord a truth that is perceived as saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

When any one seeks to impart good or truth to others, and he is not acknowledged, loved, and honored as a medium of that good or truth, he feels as if that good or truth was not rightly received and appropriated; he feels as if they were not made wiser and better by what he imparts. It then becomes him to search humbly and diligently within himself, and among them, for the causes of his failure to be useful to them; and, as fast as he discovers the causes, it is his duty to remove all that are in himself, and to seek to remove those which he finds in others.

So far as his efforts to be a medium of good and truth are from love of good and truth, he will not lose his reward; and, so far as any endeavor to make him a good medium, or, by mistake, treat him as a better medium than he is, the good and truth which they have sought will in some degree be

received. And, if any turn away from him, honestly supposing him to be a medium, not of good and truth, but of evil and falsity, though they will lose what they reject, their capacity for receiving good and truth will not thereby be destroyed: they may find other mediums through whom they can receive it. These remarks do not, however, apply to those who reject the mediums of the divine blessings, from enmity towards those mediums. If in this manner they reject the mediums, they reject and become incapable of receiving the blessings. So, also, any medium, who, from unkindness, withholds what he receives from the Lord, ceases to possess it and to be a medium of it from the Lord.

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

## S E R M O N II.

## AFFLICTIONS.

Rev. iii. 19.—AS MANY AS I LOVE, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN: BE ZEALOUS, THEREFORE, AND REPENT.

THE Lord neither does nor permits any thing, except for some good end; and the end which He principally regards is the eternal good of each and of all. He metes out the portion of every one in infinite mercy; and does all that He can do to save his people and bless his inheritance, to feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

The Lord is equally good to all; but this does not imply that He makes even any two alike, nor that any two use the same blessings of the Lord in the same manner. As the several members of the human body, and the organs or faculties of the mind, differ from one another, and are adapted to various departments of the general use which all are designed to perform; so the several persons composing a society, a larger community, and the whole human family in heaven and earth, are different from each other, and formed into such varieties as are best adapted to promote the welfare of the whole. And, when it is said that the Lord is equally merciful or good to

each individual, the meaning is not that He treats all alike, but that He does for each one all that He can to promote the good of this individual, and to make him perform his proper use in the system of human beings to which he belongs. There must be as great variety in the Lord's dealings with different persons, as there is in their characters; for their wants, or the things best for them, are according to their qualities.

The various states and characteristics of men result partly from their hereditary qualities, and partly from what they do as free agents, and partly from what others do to them. These influences are so numerous that they account sufficiently for all the varieties of character and condition which we see or know among men; and, if we were not ignorant and short-sighted, we should see that the high condition of some, the low condition of others; the riches of some, and the poverty of others; the health of some, and the sickness of others; the long-continued life of some, and the early death of others; — that these, and all things else, which constitute or produce varieties in the conditions of the people of this earth, of the other earths, and of all in the spiritual world, are equally under the care of the Lord's Providence; and that He adapts to every variety, peculiarity, and circumstance of every one's condition, that merciful care, government, indulgence, and every variety of beneficence, which can do him any good.

If these truths concerning the Lord's Providence are acknowledged and kept in mind, they may help



us to understand the meaning and uses of many of the rebukes and chastisements which we suffer in this life. Among the severest of these, are the sickness and death of our relatives and friends ; and the Divine Providence has given us occasion to devote our present attention to this class of troubles.

Diseases, and the pains attending them, are effects of human depravity ; and, as children inherit evil propensities from their parents, they inherit the causes of diseases. Both children and adults produce diseases by disorderly affections and conduct.

These facts show that man himself, and the evil spirits operating upon him, cause his diseases and pains ; and that they are not to be ascribed to the Lord, nor to the influence of good spirits. They are permitted by the Lord ; but this does no more imply that He really produces them, than His permitting us to sin implies that He is the author or cause of our sins. And, considering that men are depraved, it is best for them to be subject to the diseases and pains which are the natural effects of depravity. And it is true, and is very important to be acknowledged and remembered, that the Lord permits no more of these diseases and pains to afflict us than He can make useful to us. It is by permitting us to suffer in some degree, in this world, the proper consequences of our depraved affections and conduct, that we are led to repentance ; and it is only for the sake of doing us good in this manner, and doing such good to those who sympathize and suffer with us, that we are permitted to suffer diseases and pains. It is only in this sense that the

Lord can be said to rebuke and chasten those whom He loves.

We are not to infer, that all men are rebuked and chastened as much as they deserve, nor that those who suffer most afflictions are worse than others. It is often true that the wicked are less plagued in this world than other men; but, after death, the things which had been delightful to them in this world are changed into things opposite and afflictive; and, in respect to all who try to serve the Lord, and do suffer many external and internal afflictions, when they come into the spiritual world, their troubles are changed into things opposite: they have the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

The reason why the wicked are not made miserable in this world, according to their deserts, is because afflictions would not be useful to them. If they were stricken any more, they would revolt more and more. They would not be melted and refined by afflictions, but hardened. But this explanation must not be carried beyond the facts of the case. The evil do suffer many afflictions in this world; and this is permitted to prevent their becoming so evil as they otherwise would, and for many useful effects on those with whom they are connected. It is quite impossible, and would not be useful to us, in our present state, to understand fully the state of those around us, and to know why the Lord deals with them, or even with us, in the precise manner that we see, or think that we see. But it is of great importance for us to know the general laws of the divine

government, and we ought to desire to know all the particulars which our states will permit the Lord to reveal to us. We ought to seek, and expect to find, instruction concerning all things which the Lord does concerning us; and, when we do not find all that we desire, we ought to believe that some secret fault of our own renders us incapable of receiving it with advantage to ourselves and others.

The causes and uses of the sufferings of children were explained in a former discourse; but it may not be without use to repeat the explanation. What we have now said may, however, suffice to show the causes of their diseases and pains; and we will attend only to the uses which may result to those who are about to die, from the severe sufferings which attend their last sickness. If these uses can be understood, we can also see what are the uses of other pains to them and to adults.

As every kind and degree of disease, so every kind and degree of pain, are effects of spiritual evils. Suffering the pains makes us fear the evils which cause them. Though the pains of children cease at death, yet the impressions made on their minds by those pains remain after death; and these remains, or the impressions made by the pains, are what are made useful to them in the other life.

After death their hereditary propensities to many evils remain with them; and it is useful to them to have their evil concupiscences excited, and denied, and put away; for by this, opposite good affections are received and implanted. But, when these concupiscences are excited, they need something to

admonish and restrain them, lest they should allow themselves to bring forth their evils into word and action. They are very carefully and kindly watched and assisted in these cases by their teachers and companions ; but it is often important that something within themselves should rise up, and produce dread or repugnance as to doing the evils to which they are tempted.

Now, is it not obvious, that, by having the remains or impressions brought up which had been produced by their pains in this world, they will have fear or dread of committing the evils which were the causes of those pains ?

For example : suppose a child to have had the hereditary evil which shows itself in quarrelling, and endeavoring to beat and injure others. You may suppose the child to have indulged this evil while in this world, or to have died before the evil came into activity. Yet the poisonous, corrupting, and tormenting evil was in the child, and was permitted to produce disease and pains and death. These pains produced impressions or feelings, and perhaps thoughts also, which were stored up and remained after death.

After he came into the spiritual world, he would often have his evil passions excited ; and they would tempt him to quarrel, and endeavor to injure others, as wicked children do in this world. And, when thus tempted, the Lord would excite in his mind some of those remains of painful feelings which he suffered during his sickness. These would be so presented to him as to make him fear or dread to

do the evil which was the cause of them. This would help him to see that his feelings were evil, and would restrain him from indulging them fully, and from expressing them, until he had time to consider, and check himself from better motives.

The fears which children sometimes suffer during sickness may have similar uses as their bodily pains. These are fears of injuring others, or of being injured. They have the same causes as bodily pains. And after death, when the child is tempted to commit the evils that caused them, these may be excited in such a manner as to give the impression that there is danger in indulging the evil feelings; and this will help to restrain and remove them.

The remains implanted by the pains and fears serve to give the mind internal hints, impressions, and admonitions, in respect to the consequences of the evils which caused them, when these evils are again excited.

Thus we say that a burnt child dreads the fire; and, although there is no natural fire in the other world, yet there is spiritual fire; and the pains produced by being burned by the one may make him dread and shun the other. And even the fear of being burned, or of suffering other injuries, which sometimes attends the delirium of sickness, may be used by the Lord to restrain the person from committing the corresponding spiritual evil, or falling into and suffering that evil after death.

The pains which we see children suffer excite exceedingly sharp pains in us, though not so sharp, nor so deep, nor by any means so depressing and

discouraging, as to see them act wickedly. And when we know and have full confidence that the Lord permits them to bear no more pains or fears than He can afterward make spiritually useful to them, we find consolation and strength and health and happiness flowing together with the loving rebukes and chastisements of the Lord. And if bodily sufferings for a few days can be made the means of saving from the slightest degree of spiritual evil and its eternal effects, who will not say that it is the Lord's love which permits these sufferings?

That some children as well as some adults have but little sickness or pain is not a proof that they are either better or worse than others, but only that the Lord does not see that it could be made useful to them.

Although sickness and its pains, and death itself, are to be regarded as things which may be made useful to us, yet they are not things which we are allowed to desire, seek, or endeavor to produce, in ourselves or others. It requires divine wisdom to know when these things are best for any one, and divine power to make them useful. They are not in themselves good; and the Lord does not do them nor permit them as things which He loves. We, therefore, are forbidden to love them, or seek to produce them. We are required to guard against pain, sickness, and death, in ourselves and others. We are required to love to have every one in full life, health, and happiness. When any one is sick, we are to do all we can to relieve his sufferings, supply his wants, and restore him to health.

It may seem that when we will and endeavor to restore a friend to health, and the Lord wills to remove him to the spiritual world, we are willing and acting against the Lord. But this is not so. We are then doing what He requires of us, and are therefore doing His will. Even if it is best, and if the Lord has so ordered, that any one should die by his present sickness, it is also best, and the Lord so requires, that the friends and neighbors of this person should do all they can to preserve his life. They should do this, knowing and truly acknowledging that it may be best that the patient should die; and they should be ready to submit to what the Lord appoints, and should acknowledge it to be good.

While they are doing their duty to the patient, the Lord and the angels are also seeking to do him good. Men act externally; and the good affections which they have, and the efforts which they make to do good to the patient, are a necessary plane, earth, or footstool, for the heavenly agents to rest upon, in order that they may do him good. Even natural good affections and offices serve as such a rest, support, and foundation; but when spiritual affections operate within, and control the natural, the support is far better, and the heavenly agents can do more good.

No friend or physician should feel discouraged, nor feel as if the efforts to do good to the patient were not useful, even if no pain seems to be alleviated, and no check is given to the disease. By their efforts to do good, they coöperate with those who know what is really good for the patient. It is their

duty to acquire and apply all the knowledge they can obtain; but their knowledge is a less important plane for the heavenly friends to rest upon than their love of doing good. If they are very ignorant, and are yet desirous that good should be done, and are willing that the Lord should work in and by them to do good, they need have no fears for the result, and ought not to reproach themselves nor others if the patient suffers much and dies. The best good of the patient is done. The external good which the friends sought is not done; but the internal good which they ought most to have regarded, and which seemed the only real good in the sight of the Lord and the angels, is done. That internal good consists in preparing the patient in the best manner for his entrance into the spiritual world, and for his receiving and doing in that world the least possible evil and the greatest possible good.

It is commonly observed, that those who have suffered pains and other afflictions are fond of reflecting upon them, and describing them to others. And this pleasure which men have in considering their past troubles is from a perception — generally very indefinite — that the troubles have done them good. The apostles had a clearer perception of this. They said, “No chastening is for the present joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, it afterward yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.”

This common sense in respect to the use of natural afflictions is the effect of influx from the angels who better know their uses, and who see them as corre-



sponding to the spiritual pains and troubles which attend regeneration. They cannot regard any thing that we suffer or enjoy in this life as of much consequence, except as it will affect our eternal condition; but they see the correspondence of all things that we suffer and all that we enjoy, and rejoice in all that are adapted to be useful to us in the future life.

They regard death as birth,— as birth into the spiritual world; and they regard the sickness which prepares for death only as preparation for birth into the spiritual world. They cannot but regard the death of children, and of all who can be made happy, as an infinite blessing; and all the pains and sickness which prepare one for being born in a good state into the other world, they must regard as blessings. And if we love and seek the kingdom of God, the joy which the angels feel when one is born into heaven will flow into us, when our children and virtuous friends are raised up into eternal happiness.

## SERMON III.

## SICKNESS.

Ps. cxix. 71. — IT IS GOOD FOR ME THAT I HAVE BEEN AFFLICTED,  
THAT I MIGHT LEARN THY STATUTES.

LIFE in this world, and all things appertaining to this life, are designed to form and prepare us for eternal life in heaven. Under the wise and merciful providence of the Lord, prosperity and adversity, pleasure and pain, health and sickness, life and death, are for the same end. He is not the cause of either natural or spiritual evil in the same sense as He is the cause of natural and spiritual blessings. He does not afflict willingly; but afflictions, both bodily and mental, are rendered necessary by our hereditary and our actual evils. Man, and not the Lord, is the author of sin; and sin is the original cause of all "the thousand nameless ills that flesh is heir to." These descend from the fathers to the children unto the third and fourth generations. The Lord seeks, by a perpetual work of salvation, to deliver us from these evils, and their consequences; but He cares principally to save us from them internally, and thus eternally. Though He pities all our sicknesses and sorrows in this life, yet He accounts

these of extremely little importance, compared with eternal misery; and He therefore permits as much affliction of body and mind in the present life as He can make conducive to our eternal welfare.

To some He can make much pain, sickness, and sorrow useful; useful in abating the power of their evils, if not wholly effectual in removing them. For them it is good to be afflicted. Others would revolt *more* if they were stricken, and therefore fatherly reproof and chastisement are withheld. Some can be led to remove their evils with little chastisement, or little experience of the consequences of those evils; and others require severer discipline. We may not say that the Lord permits as much affliction to each one as he *needs*; but He permits as much as can be made conducive to the good of the sufferer. The afflictions of any person prove not that he is better or worse than those who suffer less; but they prove that afflictions may do him good, by removing his evils, or by restraining them, and abating the power they will have over him after death.

But the effects of all things that are painful to us, as well as of all that are pleasant, are in a great degree dependent on ourselves. All are given or permitted with the design and desire on the Lord's part, that they may do us good; but it is seldom that we so improve them, that we receive all the good they are fitted and designed to effect; and we often change the Lord's blessings into curses.

These are some of the general truths by which our thoughts and feelings should be regulated, when we suffer or witness any of the pains of this life.

But few persons, even of those who know these truths, have learned well to apply them to the cases of disease, suffering, and privation of natural comforts, which frequently occur. It is of great use to know how to think of afflictions; and, if we can explain the proper mode of applying to them only a few spiritual truths, we may be thereby placed in the way of wisdom; we may begin to see the Lord's wisdom and mercy in what has been dark and without consolation, and may afterward learn from the daily instructions of His Word and Providence.

In the Sacred Scripture, those are called sick or diseased, whose spiritual life and health are injured by evil and false principles. He who is under the influence of one class of evil and false principles is spoken of as having one kind of disease; and the sickness or disease of each one is named according to the particular evils and falsities which produce it. These diseases of the spirit produce diseases of the body. But men who are spiritually diseased do not see themselves so, until their evils and falsities have produced states of misery or punishment; and those whose bodies are corrupted and filled with any sort of evil life regard themselves as still healthy, till they come to the consummation of that state, when the evil brings upon itself its proper punishment or misery.

For these reasons the Scripture commonly applies the term *sickness* to those states when the body or mind has come to the end of one period or course of life, and is suffering the misery of the sins of that period, and the pain of changing from that state,

quality, or order of life, to another. In this sense, sickness is a partial death. Death brings to an end the whole period of life in the body, and of all things belonging to it. It is attended by the pains of putting off all things of the body and of this world; and it is followed by a resurrection into a new state, or life in the spiritual world. Death is generally preceded by sickness; and this prepares the way, by gradually dissolving the connection between soul and body. Thus, sickness is in these cases, and also it is in all others, a partial death. When the death is not complete, we often see that a considerable part of the body is separated; and, if the patient recovers, he gradually acquires a new body, or a new portion of body to supply the place of what is taken away.

Each case of sickness is the death of some part of the mind and body. In respect to the mind, we do not mean that a part of it ceases to live; but it ceases to live as it had done. A change in its state takes place, and it puts off more or less even of the bodily covering which it had before. No man, therefore, is or can be the same after being sick as he was before. Those thoughts and affections, or that part of his mind which had been in full operation, may, after sickness, be laid almost wholly quiescent, and a new set of faculties may be brought into operation. When this is not the case, the former principles or springs of action are changed, so that he thinks and feels otherwise than before his sickness. He may be either better or worse; but he cannot be the same man as before. A part of his mind has

undergone the change which is called death ; and a part of his body has actually been put off ; and, when he rises again into action, he will go forth with a renovated body and in a new state of mind.

By this partial death, he may have changed from a bad to a worse state of mind and life ; or he may, by the sickness which is unto death, change from mere worldly life to infernal life. And, when such is the case, every sickness is a partial death of all that is good and true in man, and is attended by a resurrection into what is evil and false. Thus the man becomes worse.

But this is not the case with those who are advancing in regeneration. They go along in the labor and warfare of their pilgrimage from day to day, or state to state ; and occasionally they come to the end or consummation of one state, where they must be changed, must cast off much that has constituted their life, and receive new principles, or rise into a new degree of their former principles.

These periods are often attended by sickness ; probably they are always attended by some degree of bodily pain, languor, or violent forms of disease. They are also attended by troubles of mind, and not unfrequently by changes in one's worldly connections, property, and occupation. Some kind of affliction marks the end of every such state in regenerate life. There are the pains of death and the pains of birth ; the pains of putting off all things of body and mind which belonged peculiarly to the former state of life, and the pains of coming forth into the new state, and putting on what is proper to

it. But, for the greater part, the *pains* belong to the process of putting off, and *pleasure* attends putting on. Death is painful, but resurrection pleasant. And, with those who are advancing in regeneration, every new state is purer, higher, and better than the preceding. The sickness, or partial death, loosens and puts off many things that had enslaved the better principles of the mind, — puts off something of the old man, and gives birth to something of the new man.

We say that it *gives birth* to something of the new man; for we do not mean to imply that heavenly principles are stored in the mind during sickness, so as to produce the great changes which often follow. As the man is then humbled, something of truth may frequently be taught him, while he is sick, that will afterward do him good. But the principal effects of sickness are produced by bringing into activity such goods and truths as had been implanted and appropriated, but had been enslaved by old principles. When the life of the old can be brought to a period, the new may be elevated into power; and this we call giving birth to them.

Thus the states of regeneration succeed one another; the end of each being a sickness or partial death, and the end of the *last* being a total death. But each partial death is only death to some natural part or principle; it is resurrection into some new, spiritual degree of life. And the total death, or separation from the material body and from all worldly things, is a resurrection into a state in which only the good principles, or goods and truths of the

mind, are living and operative. All the evils and falsities or disorderly properties of the mind, and all that had respect to things of this world, are then either wholly removed or laid quiescent in the mind, like things forgotten. And then the spirit of the regenerate man is opened, and filled with new and unimagined measures of heavenly goods and truths ; and these are purified and exalted by a perpetual resurrection.

But sickness and all afflictions change our states with our own consent ; and the states that follow are better or worse, not only according to the quality of our previous states, but according to our humility and patience in times of affliction.

Every pain and every irritable or desponding sensation which we suffer is but the representative and effect of some evil or falsity, or gross quality, which the angels are endeavoring to remove from us, but which the evil spirits attendant upon us seek to retain in us, and which we are not quite willing to have removed.

If we are humble and patient, and desire to have the Lord heal us spiritually, all these things that afflict us are gradually taken away ; but, if we repine and murmur, and long to return to our evil life, though our state will be changed, yet our evils and falsities will not be removed, and our next state will be worse than the former. If the fires of affliction do not melt, they harden us.

Thus far we have spoken of the effects of sickness and other painful changes in the states of persons in this world, with reference only to the persons who



suffer these afflictions. But the afflictions of any one person have also much influence on others, — on those who are so connected with him as to partake of his sufferings. Those of the same family may generally be regarded as one body; and when one member suffers, all suffer with it. There are also others, with whom almost every person is intimately connected, whose spirits are allied to his. They have similar affections, and similar principles of action; and their interests are so interwoven, that, when one is touched, the whole feel it.

While we live in this world, our spirits are clothed with our material bodies, and dwell in them. But our spirits are not wholly confined to our own bodies. In proportion as we are conjoined in spirit with other persons, our spirits dwell in their bodies, and act by their bodies; and, when they suffer from disease or any calamity, we suffer with them in proportion as we are conjoined to them. When they suffer the pains of death, and their spirits are raised from their bodies, we also must in some degree suffer the same pains, because our life in their bodies comes to an end, — our spirits are separated from their bodies, and what of our spirit dwelt with them in their bodies must have a resurrection when they are raised.

Those who understand these remarks may see why we suffer so much, when our friends are sick, and when they die. In a certain sense, and to a certain extent, we also are sick, and we also die. If we are willing to undergo the change which such sickness or death is designed to produce in us, our pains are not very severe; the attendant angels can

bear any thing for us which we will permit them to bear: but if we make resistance, and refuse to be changed and raised, the sickness and death are violent and distressing.

It is commonly observed, that those who have most knowledge and love of heavenly life suffer less than merely natural persons, when sickness or death befalls either themselves or their friends; and, because they seem to be less affected by the sickness and death of their friends than natural persons are, they are often reproached as stoical, or wanting in sympathy. Some suppose that they feel as much as others, but that they have acquired the power and habit of controlling and suppressing their feelings. But neither of these suppositions reaches the true cause of the difference between them and natural persons in times of trouble. They humble themselves, and avoid resisting the change of state and the resurrection which accompany the sickness and death. They quietly and patiently suffer the Lord and His angels to effect that part of the death and resurrection which belongs to them; and such as their feelings are in respect to this, such must be their feelings in respect to that part which is suffered by their neighbor. They love their neighbor as themselves, and bear what relates to his part of the sickness and death as they bear their own part. When his spirit is released from his body, their spirits are separated with it; and the same angels who bear him away, also raise them up, and make them partakers of his joy and peace.

But, when one of our friends is suffering the

changes which the Lord effects by his sickness or death, or which are the real cause of his sickness or death, if we resist, and refuse to suffer that part of the change which belongs to us, the change must be effected by violence, and will cause us distress. And then it seems as if our pain was merely on our friend's account, and we gain credit with the world for deep sympathy and affection; but, in reality, our feelings are very selfish, and our troubles are not on our friend's account, but on our own. If we would suffer ourselves to be changed as our friend's sickness is designed to change him, and to rise into a higher and purer state, his sickness would not seem to harm us, nor his death to tear him away from us.

As sickness and death, and also all afflictions, produce different effects according to the qualities of men, so the sympathizing friends are affected variously, according to their qualities. All have a resurrection at death; but with some it is the resurrection of life, and with others it is the resurrection of damnation.

When, by the wise and merciful providence of the Lord, it is made your duty to attend upon one who is sick, and minister to his wants, and lend your strength for his weakness, it then becomes you to consider very seriously and attentively why the Lord places you in this situation.

It is not merely because you can be useful to the sick person, but also because he can be useful to you. You may have as much need of the influence which his sickness exerts over you, as he has of your services; and, if his state of mind be such as it

should be, his good influence upon you will not fall short of yours upon him. It is made your duty to attend upon him, because you need to partake of that change of state which attends his sickness; and, if your efforts to bring him out of a state of sickness into a state of health be made from the influx of the angels about you, you will receive the good which you endeavor to do to him. Your efforts to bring him into a better state will bring you into a better state. While you feel together with him, and endeavor to bear away his pains and troubles, the angels can produce that change in you which they produce in him, or rather such a change as you need to have effected. If the good which you seek to do to him proceeds not from any selfish love, but from real love of good to your neighbor, you cannot fail of being made better by doing it, even if your neighbor does not rightly acknowledge and improve it; and if he does rightly receive it, both you and he are raised into new degrees of life.

It is not to be supposed, that the uses of afflictions are just in proportion to our knowledge of those uses. The Lord does many things for us when we do not know even what He is doing; and the connection is seldom very apparent between what He requires us to do, and the effects which are produced within us while doing it. But we should remember, that we are all spiritually diseased, and that our diseases render us incapable of even knowing what is best for us. We must take the medicine prescribed by our Divine Physician, and administered by our faithful friends, whether we can or cannot under-

stand what will be its operation. And when we are suffering under bodily disease, or are partaking of the sufferings of a friend, we must not be impatient nor discouraged merely because we see not the use of the affliction. To suffer patiently what is allotted to us, and to lend ourselves to bear with others their afflictions, is essential to receiving the intended good of those afflictions, — the good of loosening our evils, bringing to an end an imperfect state of life, and raising us up into a better state.

But we must not think it unimportant to obtain correct knowledge concerning the causes and uses of any affliction. We need at least to know that it results in some manner from our depravity, and is designed to bring something of our life to an end, and give us some degree of resurrection. And we should feel that our faithful friends and the attendant angels are operating, under the Lord's divine providence, to bear with us our pains, and make them useful to us.

And those attendant on the sick or troubled have special need to know, that their friendly efforts to do good to the afflicted are spiritually serviceable in effecting the proper change in themselves and in the afflicted. And those who act as nurses, instructors, or comforters to the afflicted, should take special heed that they have spiritual good in view. If they have respect to merely temporal healing or any temporal blessing, the change which is effected in them will not be a resurrection into a better state of life; and their influence will sink the afflicted, instead of raising him up.

But, if they keep their affections set on heavenly good, they will be continually rising into a higher state, and will bear their suffering friends along with them.

The duty of the friends attendant on the sick, and the usefulness of their kindness and care, will appear more distinctly, if we bear in mind that the spiritual uses of the sickness are effected by the Lord through the medium of the angels, and that the angels cannot perform their good works without some correspondent natural operation. They must have something to rest upon; there must be some one endeavoring to do external good, in order that they may do internal good. As men can do no good except in conjunction with the angels, so neither can the angels do good without conjunction with men. Hence is the necessity that there should always be a church on the earth, in which good is done. It is the foundation of the heavens. And the good that is done or sought to be done by persons attendant on the sick, or by persons performing any other duty, is principally serviceable by being an external vessel or body into which heavenly good may flow, and in which it can operate.

When, therefore, you are attendant on the sick, endeavor so to think and feel and speak and act, that the angels can abide in you, and thence operate upon the sick. If they have not such an abiding place in you, or in some other attendant friend, they cannot come down well to the condition of the sick, and can do them but little good. But, if your conduct and the state of your mind are such that they

can dwell in you and operate from you, they can direct you to do better than you would otherwise know how to do; and what you intend, they can effect internally, so far as the patient will permit; and the good which they seek to do to the sick, they can at the same time do to you.

And this shows how great are your responsibilities, not only while attending on the sick, but at all other times. Your mind and conduct are constantly mediums or bodies in which the angels or devils operate on all around you. If you neglect any duty, those around you fail not only of the good of that duty, but of the corresponding good which the angels would have wrought internally if you had done your duty.

The friends who are attendant on the sick, think that they have a simple and sincere desire to be useful. Let them consider well, that their usefulness is really in proportion as they keep themselves in such a state that the Lord and His angels can dwell in them and operate by them.

## SERMON IV.

---

### THE HEAT AND LIGHT OF THE HOLY CITY.

Rev. xxi. 23. — AND THE CITY HATH NO NEED OF THE SUN, NEITHER OF THE MOON, TO SHINE IN IT; FOR THE GLORY OF GOD DID LIGHT IT, AND ITS LAMP IS THE LAMB.

THE city which is here mentioned is the Holy City, New Jerusalem, by which is meant the New Church which the Lord is at this day establishing in the earth.

By the sun, when spoken of in a good sense, is meant the Lord. He is the sun, and appears as the sun of heaven. That sun is, in its essence, divine love; and divine wisdom or truth flows from it, as light flows from the heat or fire of the natural sun. The Lord imparts His love to angels and heavenly men; and it is in them the love of good and truth, which is also called love of the Lord.

And as the sun means, in the supreme sense, the Lord or His divine love; so, in a lower sense, it means that love of good and truth which angels and heavenly men receive from the Lord.

But most of the expressions of the Scripture are used both in a good sense and in an opposite evil sense. This is the case with the sun and moon,



which are here mentioned ; and by sun, in that sense, is meant self-love, which is the opposite of that love of good which the Lord imparts. The love of self is the sun which is not needed to shine in the Holy City.

The angels of the middle or spiritual heaven see the Lord as a moon. All the angels see Him externally, according to what He is within them. Those in whom His love is the ruling principle see Him as a sun ; but the angels of the spiritual heaven receive more of His light or truth than of His heat or love, and they see Him as a moon. For this reason, the moon signifies the truth proceeding from the Lord, and faith in that truth, and the intelligence which angels and heavenly men derive from it.

But, in the opposite sense, the moon signifies man's self-intelligence, or that wisdom of the natural man which he does not receive and use as of the Lord, but as his own. And this self-intelligence is the moon which will not be needed to shine in the Holy City.

The reason given in the text, why the Holy City will not need the sun and moon to shine in it, or why the members of the New Church will not need to be directed by their self-love and self-intelligence, is, that the glory of God will lighten it, and that its lamp is the Lamb.

By the glory of God is meant the light or truth of the Word or Sacred Scripture. It does not mean the truths of the literal sense of the Word ; for these are called clouds, and not glory. Where the Lord's second coming is treated of, it is said that He will

come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory ; and this glory means the internal or heavenly light or truths of the Word, revealed through the clouds of the literal sense.

That these internal truths, which are the glory of God, are from the Divine Humanity of the Lord, or the Word made flesh, is meant by the declaration that its lamp is the Lamb. He is the true Light. He is the Truth.

Those who abide in the merely literal sense of the Word, without any heavenly doctrine to reveal its heavenly meaning, have nothing but merely natural intelligence to direct them in interpreting it. And, while exercising their natural intelligence, they also exercise their natural loves. Self-intelligence goes together with self-love ; for the former flows from the latter. And he who is left to derive doctrines from the literal sense of the Word by his own understanding, will certainly derive such as accord with his own ruling love. He may form such doctrines as seem in many respects to require self-denial ; but he will not form such as require an essential and internal denial of his ruling principles.

This may be illustrated by reference to the leading doctrines of the Romish and Protestant churches. The essential doctrine of the pope's supremacy, and of the duty of submitting to him in all matters of faith and life, is accompanied by many rules requiring sacrifices and penances. But, for the merely external services which it requires, it promises man eternal happiness, without removing any evil from his heart ; and what it requires of him is accom-

panied by indulgences, which are quite sufficient to keep alive in him all his natural evils.

So the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone, requires the external appearance of many good works. But, as it denies that these avail any thing in respect to salvation, man has no inducement to make them internally good. He is not taught what works are internally good; and he is warned against relying on any, as being better than mere signs of his faith. It is therefore plain, that this doctrine, as well as the former, requires no essential and internal removal of man's ruling loves. Both of them shun the two great commandments, that we should *love* the Lord with all the heart, and that we should *love* our neighbor as ourselves.

But, in the New Jerusalem, men are not left to form their doctrines from the literal sense of the Word. The doctrines of this Church are revealed from heaven, and are written and printed for the use of all who are willing to receive them. Being thus revealed, they are not conformed to our self-love; and our self-intelligence has nothing to do but to submit itself to their authority. Nothing more is necessary, in order that the glory of God may enlighten us, and that our lamp may be the Lamb, than that we should turn our minds to these heavenly doctrines, and faithfully do, from day to day, the truths which we can see to be revealed.

Every one may for a long time remain ignorant of many duties, and many degrees of every duty. But, if he endeavors to do every truth that he learns, he will soon acquire a strong affection for learning

the heavenly truths ; and every new truth will reveal new duties, and every new degree of truth will teach him how to perform his duties more internally and fully. And in this way he will learn what evil and false principles are in him, and how to remove them ; and he will be compelled to deny them and put them away, in order to do the truths which he learns. And in this way he will become pure and wise and holy, as fast as he has any capacity to become so.

Those who have attended to this statement can see, that in the New Jerusalem there is no use for self-love and self-intelligence : the city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it. The glory of God, or the truths revealed from the internal sense of the Word, so enlighten it, that our natural loves and natural intelligence may be dispensed with in all cases when we are determining our spiritual duties. We need natural intelligence to teach us how to perform natural labors ; but in respect to our spiritual duties, and the way to perform natural labors under the direction and control of heavenly principles, we need only the glory of God to enlighten us.

Those who have not the heavenly doctrines to direct them are accustomed to reason about their spiritual and moral duties, and to determine them, in the same manner as they reason upon and determine the proper modes of cultivating their land, and performing their mechanical labors. The spiritual degree of their minds is not opened. Natural and spiritual things are not sorted and separated in their

minds; but they all exist together in a state of confusion in the natural degree of their minds, and they see no essential distinction between natural and spiritual duties.

Tell such a person that he ought to keep the sabbath holy, to learn the truths of the Word, to pray, to be baptized, to receive the Holy Supper, or to perform any other spiritual duty, externally or internally; and, if he gives any attention to your counsel, he will begin to consult his self-intelligence to learn whether that sanctions your counsel. He will turn over the many things which he has stored in his mind that say it is not necessary or expedient to do so. Perhaps, among the rubbish of his mind, he may chance to turn up some truth of the Word that tells that your advice is good; but his self-love will rise up at that moment, and set him to reasoning about it, and you will directly discover that an evil will rules his understanding, and renders your advice unavailing.

Now, see how differently truths are treated by one who is enlightened by the glory of God, and walks in that light. Tell him a duty, and the first thing he does is to lay his own will and his self-intelligence quiescent. They must have nothing to do as to determining whether your advice is good. He looks within to his internal mind, and consults the doctrines and truths which are stored there; and there he seeks light from the Lord to show whether you have spoken according to the Word. And, when he sees that you have told his duty, he acknowledges it, and immediately resolves to do it. And, when his

selfish and worldly principles afterward come into exercise, and seek to turn him aside from his duty, and to raise obstacles to his performing it, he very mildly but resolutely tells them that they are neither his masters nor his counsellors. Finding that the proposed duty is opposed by his own will and his self-intelligence does not make him doubt its being his duty; nor does he doubt it because the self-intelligence and self-will of any other person oppose his doing it. He knows that this will and intelligence are always opposed to his spiritual duties; and their opposition, therefore, excites confidence and energy in going forward to do his duty. Their opposition is an excellent reason for making haste to do it.

When a man is thus prompt and faithful in receiving and doing the truth, it is very plain that he has no need of the sun or moon to shine in his mind. He turns away from them, and seeks only truth from the Word; and, when he receives that, it settles all questions. He does not allow himself to doubt nor reason about it; but he employs his rational faculty only in explaining and confirming what he has seen to be true by a higher faculty. And, regarding the truth as telling what the Lord's will is, he has nothing to do with his own will but to deny it.

This manner of treating the divine truths is so different from what is practised by many who are called New Churchmen, that some may be led to question whether it really is the manner of treating them that is required by the heavenly doctrines. We

can only assure them that it is, and ask them to read and satisfy themselves.

The reason why those who are called receivers of the heavenly doctrines do not treat the divine truths in the manner we have described, is, that they have but just begun to be New Churchmen, and have not yet put off their natural habits of treating the divine truths. They still suffer their selfish affections and their self-intelligence to have great influence with them. They have not overcome the world, and therefore the habits of the world around them do greatly entice them. It still seems to some of them, and in a degree to all, as if the Holy City had some need of the sun and moon to shine in it, as if there were need to exercise their self-love and self-intelligence. It does not seem to them quite expedient or safe to walk simply in the light of the glory of God, and to have no lamp but the Lamb.

But the doctrines of the New Church are not to be judged by the conduct of those who profess them. Suppose that you judge of the character of the Lord Himself, and the instructions He gave while on earth by the conduct of His disciples. His first disciples regarded and treated Him as if He were to establish a temporal kingdom; and, when all prospect of this vanished, they all forsook Him and fled. Were his words less true, or less essential to eternal life, because His disciples did not understand them and abide in them? Look at the heresies and the wickedness which have been common with those who have been called Christians from that day to the present; and will you allow that these are true in-

dexes of the meaning and spirit of the truths of the New Testament ?

But why do men choose to judge in this manner ? Is it not because they find excuses for remaining in their sins while they judge of a religion by the character of its professors, but they are condemned when they come to the truths themselves ?

It would be unreasonable to expect of the receivers of the heavenly doctrines at this day, that they should bring the essential truths fully into life ; but it ought to be expected of them to acknowledge those truths in theory, and to be in the endeavor to do them. There ought to be none who know these truths, and yet say that it is not expedient and right to do them. When any one knows that he fails of doing some of the truths, or certain degrees of some of them, he ought not to justify his neglect, and say that it is right for him under present circumstances to do otherwise than as the truths teach. Let him still acknowledge these truths to be the only rule of life, and let him make no excuses but what the truths make for him. They are very merciful. They take into consideration all our weakness, all our imperfections, and all the embarrassing circumstances of our condition. They exact nothing of us but what is for our good, and nothing but what they will give us ability to perform, if we give up ourselves to doing them.

When we see what duties these truths teach us to perform, what order they require to be established in our families and in the church, if we turn away, and say that it is not yet our duty to try to do those



truths, — that ourselves and the church are yet too imperfect for these things, — then it is certain that we set up something besides the truths to direct us. And what we set up to direct us can be nothing but the sun and moon, — our selfish love and our self-intelligence. We worship and are directed by them; and this is meant by worshipping the sun and moon, which is so strongly forbidden in the Word.

If man sets up his own will and intelligence to live by until he shall be good enough to keep the commandments, how long will it be before he arrives at that state?

There are some who do not do all the truths they know, but yet do not really set up other principles to live by. They are struggling against their self-love and self-intelligence, and are gradually loosening themselves from their power; and they do this by meditating upon the truths, and doing them in small degrees, and thus acquiring more faith in them. By such a process the truths in their minds are in some degree separated from their natural principles, and arranged and combined so as to acquire more power. Thus their internal minds are in some degree formed, and they are prepared to do externally what they have been doing internally.

Ask such a person why he does not perform certain external spiritual duties, and he has little to say. He is conscious that it is from the imperfections of his state, and he will not raise up a set of natural principles to justify that state. He will not attempt to prove that he is right in neglecting any duty. He will humble himself, and thus prepare to be exalted.

For such persons we ought to have a very tender regard. We should keep near them, and encourage and strengthen them. We should carefully distinguish between these, and such as deny that any of the truths of the church should be their present rules of duty; for the former have some acknowledgment, and are acquiring more acknowledgment, of these truths as rules of present duty; but the latter have set up the sun and moon as the objects of their present worship. The former are in the way, and are coming, however slowly, into the church and heaven; and there may be with them a process of coming that is more rapid and more full than we have eyes to discern. But those who refuse to do the truths, and deny that it is their duty to do them, and defend their right to act for the present according to their self-intelligence, or any principles not distinctly revealed in the doctrines, — such persons are going in the opposite direction. And, if their states be noticed from year to year, it will appear that the truths of the church gradually become merely speculative principles, and that their practical principles are from another origin.

If we carefully observe the difference between these two modes of treating the heavenly truths which are revealed for the New Church, we shall see the essential cause of all the dissensions in the church. But it will not be well for us to set ourselves up as judges of others, although we ought not to shun the duty of distinguishing between right and wrong wherever they are manifested. It is our principal duty to apply the doctrine of the text to

ourselves; to explore ourselves, and see wherein we act from any other principles than the truths of the church; to abase our self-love and self-intelligence, and to give up ourselves wholly to the direction of the Lord.

We shall then be in a good state to distinguish between right and wrong in others, and their wrongs will have no power to lead us astray. Neither shall we have any unkindness towards them on account of their wrongs. But we shall stand quietly and humbly and safely in that relation to all others in which we are placed by doing the truth.

And, when we adopt this course, there will be less in our conduct than there now is to bring discredit on the doctrines which we profess. We shall then adhere faithfully to our Mother the Church, and conform to all the order, and endeavor to perform all the duties, revealed by our Father through our Mother. And in this way we shall so let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father in the heavens.

Another caution is necessary. It is possible to devote ourselves very fully to learning and doing the truths which are revealed, and yet to call those truths our own, and to do them as if they were our opinions instead of the Lord's words. In that case, we become proud, and thank God that we are not as others. In doing His truths, we have too much respect to self, and desire the honor of doing well. We do not keep in mind that the truths which we know and do are of the Lord; and, in doing them, we do not worship and serve Him.

That our actions may be really good, it is essential, not only that they should be done according to truth, but that they should have respect to the Lord. Every act should be an acknowledgment of Him, — an acknowledgment of Him as the Truth and Good and Power from which we act. We thus avoid making His truths our own intelligence ; and then it is truly His glory that enlightens us, and our lamp is the Lamb.

## SERMON V.

## APPEARANCES OF TRUTH.

1 Kings xix. 11, 12. — AND HE SAID, GO FORTH, AND STAND UPON THE MOUNT BEFORE THE LORD; BEHOLD THE LORD PASSING BY. AND A GREAT AND STRONG WIND RENT THE MOUNTAINS, AND BRAKE IN PIECES THE ROCKS BEFORE THE LORD: THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE WIND. AND AFTER THE WIND AN EARTHQUAKE: THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE EARTHQUAKE. AND AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE A FIRE: THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE FIRE. AND AFTER THE FIRE A SMALL VOICE OF SILENCE.

THE divine good and truth, as they are manifested to natural men, appear very differently from what they do in the heavens. Men see them together with the effects which they produce in this world: thus they see them in connection with all the opposition that is made to them by wicked men, and by the evils and falsities in their own minds. The strife and confusion which result from opposition to good and truth seem to natural men to be caused by the good and truth. So it seemed to the Jews, that the Prince of Peace was a seditious person, and that Paul and Silas turned the world upside down.

It is not difficult to see, that, in such cases, all the noise, harshness, and contention that are made, orig-

inate in the evil and false principles of men, and not in the goods and truths revealed from heaven to men. Those who are made truly rational can also see that there cannot possibly be in the Lord, nor in the good and truth proceeding from Him, any thing of anger, harshness, or a spirit of contention; but that all is love, mildness, and peace. And they can see that all things in the Sacred Scriptures which ascribe to God any thing of severity, revenge, or any thing but mercy and peace, are but representatives of the manner in which He, and His good and truth, appear to those whose evil and false principles are opposed to Him and His Word. What has here been said may be illustrated by facts respecting sound.

When sound is in the higher and purer regions of the atmosphere, or in any place from which the dense atmosphere is withdrawn, it is very slight, tacit, or almost imperceptible. But when sound descends from a pure, thin atmosphere into one that is gross or dense, it becomes louder and harsher. So the divine truth and good, as revealed by the Lord in the pure regions of the higher heavens, are soft, gentle, and pacific. They there produce no disturbance, for nothing opposes them. But, as they descend into the lower heavens, and through these into this world, they seem harsh, dictatorial, thundering, imprecating, and tumultuous, in proportion as they meet with what is not in perfect agreement with them.

This is what was represented to Elijah by what is recorded in our text. That he might understand

these things, he was commanded by the Lord "to go forth, and stand on the mount before the Lord, and behold the Lord passing by."

When he received this command, he was in a cave of the mountain. By the mountain is signified good, or an elevated state of spiritual life. But a cave within a mountain is a dark place: light is excluded from it, and it receives but little heat. It therefore corresponds to a very imperfect state of good, — a state in which man has some love of knowing and doing his duty, but scarcely knows what is his duty. But, because he is willing to be instructed, the Word of the Lord comes to him, and commands him to go forth from the cave, and stand upon the mountain, where light is manifested, and where he can understand how the divine good and truth flow into, and operate in and by, the various classes of angels and men; and why they appear differently, and produce different effects, in the different classes of angels and men.

It is necessary to be in a state of heavenly love, and in the light thence derived, in order that these things may be well understood. The mind must be in a state above the spiritual clouds and darkness and tempests and confusion which attend the descent of divine good and truth, in order that the true causes of these things may be clearly known. The man or angel who will know these things must be on a mountain above them, so that he will "see Jehovah passing by him," in descending to the regions where these things are produced; for, while the thoughts and affections belong to the region

where these things exist, they cannot be comprehended.

“ And a great and strong wind rent the mountain, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord : the Lord was not in the wind.”

The term *spirit* signifies *breath* or *wind*. The Holy Spirit is the Divine Breath, proceeding from the lungs of the Divine Man. And as human speech or words are expressions or forms of the human breath, so the Divine Word, as it is on earth and as it is in the heavens, consists of the expressions and forms of the Divine Breath, — the Spirit of Truth, or Holy Spirit.

As this Spirit proceeds from the divine lungs, it is infinitely pure, soft, and gentle ; but, when it is communicated among angels and men, it meets with their opposing qualities, and is clothed with their spirit ; and hence it sometimes appears and operates as a raging wind, instead of a gentle breathing.

When the Lord revealed his words on Mount Sinai, and there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mount, these effects did not indicate the quality of the pure words which he spake, but of the people who received them. When the Lord dwelt among men in a material body, and spake to them words at which they were angry, and on account of which violent excitements, tempests, and confusion existed among them, these things could not be properly ascribed to the spirit of His words ; for this was divinely gentle and merciful. And we sometimes see among men, that the purest and calmest language produces the most violent



opposition, and the most raging wind or spirit of clamor, rebuke, and persecution. But, in all such cases, we know that these effects are attributable to things gross, evil, and false in those to whom the truth is addressed. It is this spirit, and not the spirit of truth, which is in these effects.

This remark applies not only to the excited, noisy, and tumultuous spirit of those who oppose the truth, but to the spirit of those who, in low states of mind, embrace and teach and defend it. There are gross and opposing principles in the minds of those who have not been purified by the truth; and, when they are fighting and renouncing these, their confession and defence of the truths are loud and vehement. While the pure Divine Spirit is rending the mountains of man's evil loves, and breaking in pieces the rocks of his falsities, man perceives the quality of the Spirit by these effects; and it seems to be a great and strong wind.

But the Lord is not in the wind. The Lord is said to be in that only which is from Him. We have seen that we ought not to ascribe the raging wind or spirit to the Lord. It originates in man's gross and impure qualities. But the same man who externally excites, and is excited by, this wind, may internally have only the gentle operations of the Spirit of Truth. As this gentle and pacific Spirit descends from the internal degrees of the mind into the external and gross degrees, it becomes noisy, harsh, and impacific. We may then say that the Lord is not in that stormy wind, but that He is *within* it. His Spirit is the interior cause; and this,

descending, produces effects that are different, according to the qualities of those in whom the Spirit operates, or to whom the Word is revealed.

When we notice the noisy eloquence and violent action of one in the first state of regenerate life, we ascribe those things to the gross qualities of his natural mind; and we think, that, within this noisy zeal, there is something better; and we expect, that, when his natural mind is regenerated, the Spirit will descend with gentleness and peace, — will descend in bodily shape like a dove.

“And after the wind an earthquake: the Lord was not in the earthquake.”

The first changes effected by the truth, as it descends among men, relate to thought, speech, instruction, and doctrine. These are from the breath, and they are meant by the great and strong wind and its effects. The evils of self-love and love of the world are assailed by the truth, and the effects are represented by the rending of the mountains: the principal falses grounded in these evils are detected and dissipated, and this is meant by breaking in pieces the rocks. Next follows the shaking and demolishing of those things which belong to the actual life. We see the effects of this when man turns against the religious institutions which he had formerly supported, abandons the habits of life which he had cherished, and forsakes the friends of his worldliness, that he may be the Lord's disciple. This shaking of the very ground of his own mind, and the effects thereby produced in the community, are meant by the earthquake.

By such changes in the states of individuals, the political and religious institutions, occupations, and characters of whole societies and nations, are essentially changed. And these changes are not effected without violence and confusion. Old things cannot be removed, and all things be made new by the Word of the Lord, without there being great distress in the land, and wrath among the people. And, in proportion as men have within them what must be put away, and are unwilling to put it away, they will ascribe the violence, agitation, and distress to the truth itself; but it ought to be ascribed to those things, in themselves and others, which oppose the truth. Themselves, and not the Lord, are in the earthquake. Were it not for the wrong qualities in themselves, there would be no such agitation and distress, when the divine truth descends among them.

“And after the earthquake a fire: the Lord was not in the fire.”

When the wind and the earthquake produce their accustomed effects in any mind or any community, there is always much fire following them. Those who persist in evil life are made angry. Those who attempt to reform, but are in external states of mind, manifest a burning zeal for the cause of truth. The divine love of saving them from sin operates in the inmost degrees of their minds, and produces love of shunning evils as sins, and of imparting the Lord's good and truth to others. This is the fire of genuine charity. But, as it descends into and through the externals of the mind, and is imparted to others, it

is met and opposed by falsities proceeding from opposite fires. These it has occasion to burn up, and hence there is smoke. And this burning from opposite loves causes a great deal of fire. The most raging part of it is that which results from the zeal of natural affections to preserve the objects to which they are devoted, and their own lives.

But it is very plain, that the love which is of the Lord has no tendency to destroy, but to save. Destruction comes from opposition to it. He is infinitely loving and merciful to the evil as well as the good ; but, where His love descends by His truth, it seems to the wicked that a fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about. The destruction is from their opposition ; and the destroying fire which they perceive, and from which they suffer, is in their own breasts, and not from the Lord. The Lord is not in the fire. But, as far as possible, He reigns within it, and prevents its destroying what is not opposed to Him. And, when the opposing loves of man are subdued, removed, and are succeeded by heavenly loves, then the final warfare is ended. The divine truth then comes down into the lowest degrees of the mind, and goes forth thence in word and deed, without any great and strong wind, or any earthquake, or any raging fire.

“ And after the fire a small voice of silence.”

This indicates the state of tranquillity and peace which follows the combats of the states of regeneration. It is the sabbath succeeding the six days of labor. It is that celestial state in which audible

language is little used. There is a simple yea, yea, and nay, nay ; but thoughts and affections of all kinds are expressed by changes of the countenance, by modulations but not articulations of the voice, and by doing what is thought and felt.

Every one who is ever in a state of union and peace with any other, knows that their thoughts and affections can be interchanged with but little talk, and without any declamation or eloquent speeches. And the more pure and heavenly and full the thoughts and affections are, the more inadequate is common language, and the less is it needed, to express them.

When man's own will and his own intelligence are quiescent, and he dwells in the Lord, and thinks and wills from the Lord, there is no wind, no earthquake, and no fire, except with those who oppose him. His doctrine drops as the rain, his speech distils as the dew. It is only when he partakes of the sphere of those in lower states, and his own natural principle is excited, that his expressions become noisy and turbulent.

Who does not know, that a whisper is designed to express what is so interior that it is unfit for loud language ? Who has not noticed, that, when he enters into his closet, and shuts the door, and prays to his Father in secret, he needs not cry out to Him as if He were asleep, or had gone a journey ? And who that has any sense of the humility of heavenly decorum is not troubled and grieved by the boisterous harangues of the prayers of sensual men ?

The Holy Spirit of Truth is perceived by man, as

making impressions within the mind, and not as speaking to it. Its voice is not audible as being uttered out of the mind, and flowing into it; but it is only perceptible as within it. And when the same Spirit seems to be communicated through the medium of any teacher or friend, it is not perceived as belonging to the articulate sounds of his voice, but as being within them, and as belonging to an internal atmosphere. In either case, it is a still, small voice, or a small voice of silence. And, when we are hearkening to this voice, we desire that all the earth, or all external things, may keep silence.

It is not said in the text, that the Lord was in this small voice; but every one knows that this is the meaning. That very voice of silence teaches it.

What we have said throughout this discourse is designed to show how differently the Divine Word, or Spirit of Truth, appears to persons in different states of mind. And to those who are standing upon the mountain, and behold the Lord passing by, and can understand the apparent changes of His truth, as it descends even to evil men, it becomes quite manifest that the Word is so written as to exhibit all these apparent changes. In its lower senses, it is clothed with the appearances arising from man's thoughts and affections. And it is on this account that many parts of the Word speak of God as an arbitrary and revengeful monarch; and that heaven and the way of life, and also hell and the way of death, are described in the literal sense as they appear to the natural man. In order that the Word may communicate to man any ideas concerning these

things, it must express its truths in forms accommodated to man's state of understanding.

Men in different states see different meanings in the same words of the Scripture ; and the Word is so written that it is adapted to the states of all natural men, and to all the states of those who are ascending in regenerate life, and all the states of those who stand upon the mountain and behold the Lord passing by.

It is not strictly true, that the divine truths are changed in their quality as they descend, and are adapted to persons in different states. The appearance is, that they are changed or modified ; and it is common in the Word, in the writings of Swedenborg, and in religious discourse, to find expressions which imply such a change. But the man himself is not changed by his clothing. The light of the sun is not changed by the several atmospheres through which it descends, nor by the glasses through which we see it. These things present the light to the eye under very different appearances, and by this means they affect our view of the objects from which the light is reflected. But the quality of the light itself is not changed, whether we receive little or much of it, or whether it is presented in one manner or another.

So the spheres of angels and men through which the truth descends, and the thoughts of their own intelligence through which they see it, do not change the truth itself, though they present it under innumerable forms to the understanding. And although the various appearances of truth are used in Scrip-

ture to clothe it and accommodate it to angels and men in their various states, yet the genuine truth is within all these appearances, and remains as unchangeable as God. And though the impure exhalation from the minds of men shroud the Sun of Righteousness in such thick darkness that He is wholly invisible to them, yet that darkness hideth them not from Him, but the night shineth as the day.



## SERMON VI.

---

COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD LAY.

Matt. xxviii. 1—6. — BUT AT THE EVENING OF THE SABBATHS, AT THE DAWNING INTO ONE OF THE SABBATHS, CAME MARY MAGDALENE AND THE OTHER MARY TO VIEW THE SEPULCHRE.

AND, BEHOLD, THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE; FOR THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, DESCENDING FROM HEAVEN AND COMING, ROLLED AWAY THE STONE FROM THE DOOR, AND SAT UPON IT.

AND HIS COUNTENANCE WAS AS LIGHTNING, AND HIS RAIMENT WHITE AS SNOW.

AND FOR FEAR OF HIM THE KEEPERS DID SHAKE, AND BECAME AS DEAD.

BUT THE ANGEL ANSWERED AND SAID TO THE WOMEN, FEAR NOT YE; FOR I KNOW THAT YE SEEK JESUS THE CRUCIFIED. HE IS NOT HERE; FOR HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID. COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD LAY.

THERE had been several churches on the earth before the Lord came, and glorified His Humanity. The Jewish church was the last; and the end of this, which occurred when the Lord was glorified, was the consummation of all the dispensations of truth, and modes of redeeming and saving men, without the medium of this Humanity.

This end of all former dispensations and churches is meant by the evening or close of the sabbaths; and the beginning of the communication of that light

from the Divine Humanity, by which the Christian church was to be formed, is meant by the dawning into one of the sabbaths. The Christian church was not to be formed at once in fulness and perfection : it was to consist of successive churches, having different degrees of light from the Word. Hence, this dispensation, and the church formed from it, are spoken of in the plural ; and the "dawning into one of the sabbaths" has particular respect to the first Christian dispensation, and signifies the first degrees of truth then revealed.

At the end of one church and the beginning of another, they who have an affection for good, and they who have an affection for truth, seek knowledge concerning the Lord, and regeneration, and resurrection into life. This is signified by its being said, that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to view the sepulchre. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary are the affections of good and truth, or they are spoken of as representing all persons who have such affections.

The Lord's sepulchre signifies the Lord's glorification, and also man's regeneration and resurrection into life. When man dies, and his body is laid in the grave, the angels do not think of these things as they relate to this world and man's temporal life, but as they relate to the spiritual world and to man's eternal life. They see his death as birth into that world, and life in that world.

Laying the natural body in a grave or tomb is, to them, rising into the spiritual world in a spiritual body. And, as the Lord became fully glorified

when He was laid in the sepulchre, therefore the angels understood this by the sepulchre, and by His being laid in it. And, as man's regeneration and resurrection into life are the things for the sake of which the Lord was glorified, these also are signified by His death, by His being laid in the sepulchre, and by the sepulchre itself.

To come to view the sepulchre is to draw near from affection to learn the truths which teach concerning the Lord's glorification, and man's regeneration and resurrection into life. This is done by all who are in affections of good and truth, at the end of every church and the beginning of every new church, — at the end of the sabbaths, at the dawn into one of the sabbaths.

“ And, behold, there was a great earthquake ; for the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven and coming, rolled away the stone from the door, and sat upon it.”

By the great earthquake is signified the change in the state of the church, when former things are abolished, and all things are made new.

By the descent of the angel is meant the proceeding of divine truth through the heavens from the Divine Humanity. By his rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulchre is signified the removal of the falsities which had obstructed the way to Him. He thereby opened the sepulchre. It was only the evils and falsities of men which crucified Him, and placed and concealed Him in the sepulchre ; and the opening of the sepulchre is removing what conceals Him from men, thus the

falsities which had concealed Him and all heavenly things.

That the angel sat on the stone implies that the divine truth has abiding or permanent power over falsities. This stone was what had closed the sepulchre. By this sepulchre was represented resurrection and regeneration, and the glorification of the Lord's Humanity. When the Lord was fully glorified, He opened these subjects so that men could understand them: He removed what had concealed them, and had permanent dominion over it. The door is opened at the beginning of a church to the knowledge of the Lord and of the way of life.

It is said of the angel, "His countenance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow."

By lightning is signified the sparkling and splendor of divine truth. The countenance being as lightning, therefore, denotes the love of truth; for truth which is from love brings with it a flaming principle derived from fire, which principle is lightning. A. C. 8813.

Raiment signifies truths; hence the garments of the angels correspond to their intelligence. The spiritual angels are clothed in white garments; the celestial appear in shining garments, varying in color according to the quality of their loves.

That we may be taught who the Lord is, and how He glorified His Humanity, and how He is exalted, and also how man is regenerated and raised up into heavenly life, we must have a genuine affection for good and truth; and then the celestial and the spiritual angels will descend to our minds, and

remove the falsities which close or conceal these things, and will instruct us concerning them. And, though we do not see them personally, we shall see the light and feel the love with which they are enlightened and vivified.

“And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead.”

When heavenly truths are revealed, they execute a judgment. Those who do not love them are thrown by them into all sorts of troubles. The keepers of the sepulchre are those who teach false doctrines and defend them, and thereby prevent men from entering into the true doctrines of the Word. They shut up the kingdom of God, and neither enter themselves nor suffer others to enter. They are unwilling that men should know any thing of the Lord, and of life from Him. They crucify Him, and seek to keep Him dead and buried. They kill Him, and keep His sepulchre.

This was literally done by the Jews, and is spiritually done by men at this day. It is within the memory of many of us, that the teachers of false doctrines sought to deter men from inquiring concerning the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity, of regeneration, of resurrection, and of the state of man after death, by saying that these things were holy mysteries which men could not understand, and ought not to wish to know. Thus they enclosed the Lord in a sepulchre, and sealed it, and set a watch. And when the revelations which have been made to the New Church were manifested to them, for fear of them these keepers of the sepulchre did shake, and became as dead.

“ But the angel answered and said to the women, Fear not ye ; for I know that ye seek Jesus the crucified.”

Those who have an affection for truth and good are taught by the Lord's Spirit that they have no reason to fear learning the heavenly truths that are revealed. Many are found to try to dissuade them ; but, if they really seek Jesus the crucified, they are encouraged and strengthened till they find Him. Jesus the crucified becomes to them Jesus who is raised up, glorified, and exalted as head over all. To those who have despised and rejected and slain Him, and who continue so to treat Him, He is crucified, and remains in the sepulchre, or they know not where ; but, to those who repent of their sins and seek salvation from the Lord, He manifests Himself in His glory, and fills them with His life. To them He was dead, but is alive again, and lives for evermore.

Such persons, when they read of the Lord's death or crucifixion, do not think of Him as having been dead, as others think of His death. They think of His having put off a natural body, and put on a divine body. Thus they think of Him as having been made more alive, rather than as having lost any life. And they think of His sepulchre as only the gate of entrance into His glory.

“ He is not here ; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

To those whose minds are filled with false principles, all truths proceeding from Him are destroyed or perverted ; and with them and by them the Lord

is crucified, and enclosed in a sepulchre formed of their false principles. Others have their minds filled with merely worldly knowledges, which teach them nothing of spiritual life, but only how to live from selfish and worldly loves. These also bury the Lord, or entomb all the truths they receive from Him within their worldly knowledges.

But with those who seek Jesus, — who seek to be saved from their sins, — He is not here concealed in such sepulchres. He is risen. He is risen in them out of such sepulchres, and is exalted into the heavens and above the heavens of their minds. And this is the only resurrection which gives man eternal life: it is the resurrection, ascension, exaltation of the Lord, or of those truths and goods which the Lord imparts, so that these live and reign in the internals of the mind, and give direction and life to the whole man.

What advantage is it to you that Jesus rose from the sepulchre where the Jews laid Him? If you continue to treat as they did what He teaches in His Word, and does in His Providence, He is, in respect to you, crucified, dead, and buried. That He *did rise* is not what you ought to seek to know, and be satisfied with believing; but you need to know that He *has risen in you*, and is constantly receiving a more full resurrection in you. Mark well whether His truths are the lights and the undisputed guides of your conduct, and whether His love of saving you from sin has become your love of shunning all evils as sins. And if you find this to be so, then in you the Lord has risen indeed. You

are raised from a life natural and evil to a life spiritual and holy. You are raised out of your own life into His life. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in this resurrection.

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

That you may be more humble before Him, look at the sepulchre in which you have laid Him during many and long periods of your lives. Look at the falsities and evils by which you have rejected and perverted His truths, and the self-intelligence and worldliness which have kept buried the remains of good and truth you have received from Him. And if it be a reality that the revelations now made for the New Church have rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and that ye seek Jesus, then no longer seek the living among the dead. No longer seek in natural things the life and the happiness which are proper to immortal beings, but seek first the kingdom of God and his justice. Know and acknowledge that He is risen. Look upward, above the sphere of natural thoughts and affections, and see and perceive the truth and good imparted by Him in the internals or heavens of your minds; and worship Him there, and bring down these truths and goods as the principles and life of all your words and works.

The enemies of the Lord were not satisfied with simply murdering Him; but, by enclosing Him in a sepulchre, and sealing it, and setting a watch, they sought to guard against His resurrection. This, therefore, was their last act of cruelty; and it involved all the opposition they had showed Him from



the beginning. It is common in the Word, that, when the first or the last act in a series is mentioned, it involves the whole. When, therefore, we see the place where the Lord lay, we see all that His enemies did to Him, and all that He did for the redemption of men. We see how we have treated Him, and what He has done for us.

We have treated Him as we have treated His truths; for He was and is the Word. All that we have done in opposition to His truths has been rejecting and crucifying Him; and all we have done to cover up, hide, and keep His truths dormant in our minds, after having known them, has been enclosing and securing Him in a sepulchre.

What we have done to those who receive and teach and do His Word, has also been done to Him. So much as we have done to one of the least of these His brethren, we have done to Him. If we have rejected their counsels, degraded their characters, withheld from them proper encouragement and coöperation in their efforts to do good, or in any way opposed and prevented their being mediums to us and others of the Lord's good and truth, — then we have in the same degree acted against the Lord's good and truth, and thus against the Lord. As we have buried the goods and truths of the Lord's disciples, so we have buried Him.

We are prone to deceive ourselves, and to imagine that we are not angry at our neighbors on account of their good works, and that we do not oppose their being mediums of good and truth, but only of evil and falsity.

It is easy and natural to think so, even when the real or supposed wrongs of others have excited animosity in our breasts, and while we think and speak evil of them, and make no brotherly efforts to reclaim them.

But while our opposition to them is from our natural feelings; while it has any thing of unkindness in it; and while we act against them according to our self-intelligence, and not according to the truths of the Word; we are really more opposed to the good and truth in them, than to any thing evil or false. Our unkindness and enmity are natural and evil, and are essentially opposed to all good and truth.

In order to oppose the wrongs of another without opposing the good and truth in him and from him, we must be able to distinguish, and to preserve the distinction, between him and his evil qualities; and, while we oppose and seek to put away from him all his evils and falsities, we must love him and endeavor to do him good. So the Lord treats us. He feels no unkindness towards us on account of our evils, though they are more opposed to Him than they can be to any man. He loves us infinitely, and seeks to impart to us every good. Be ye, therefore, merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful.

When we do not exercise this mercy, we reject it, and reject also the truths which teach us to have it. And this is rejecting the Lord. And then we substitute our falsities and self-intelligence, to direct us in our treatment of our neighbor; and these slay and bury the goods and truths of our neighbor, and set a watch against their coming into life. Just so

far as we do this to one another, we do it to the Lord. How frequently have we thus crucified and buried the Lord! "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

But in respect to the Lord, and all persons whom He has raised up, and all qualities of any individual which He has raised up, all these things have a very different meaning. In respect to the Lord, His sepulchre signifies His resurrection, and thence His full glorification. And, in respect to all that He raises up, it signifies their regeneration and resurrection into heavenly life. And, as it signifies the end or completion of the Lord's glorification, and of man's regeneration, so it signifies the whole process by which the Lord was glorified, and is glorified in man, and man is regenerated.

That we should come and see the place where the Lord lay, therefore, means that we should see how He was glorified, and how we must be regenerated. And it means not only that we should see, understand, and acknowledge these things, but that we should know them practically,—that the Lord should be glorified and raised up in us, and thus that we should be raised up out of natural life into heavenly, by following Him in the regeneration. It would do us no good to see the place where the Lord lay, unless we also laid down our life that we might receive life from Him. It would do us no good to know that He was glorified, unless we also became regenerated. It would do us no good to know any truths concerning Him and life from Him, unless we lived in those truths. But, if we will seek

Jesus the crucified that we may receive His salvation and eternal life, then it is good to come, and see the place where the Lord lay.

It is good to see how He ascended from natural life into divine life, and how He gives us a resurrection out of natural life into spiritual and celestial life; and it is very good to be thus raised up into His life. But let us remember, that we can be raised up only by renouncing and laying down all things of our selfish and worldly life. And we can be raised up into conjunction with the Lord, only so far as we love one another, and are brought into heavenly consociation with one another.

The Holy Supper is designed to give us this conjunction with the Lord, and consociation with each other. It is not designed to make us love one another naturally, but spiritually; not to make us treat each other well according to the principles of worldly wisdom, but according to the truths of the Word. It is not to give us such consociation as natural men seek and enjoy; for they love only those who love them, and do good to those only who do good to them. The love which the Lord gives in the Holy Supper is His own love of good and of doing eternal good to all; and the truth which He imparts contains that love, and shows us how to receive and exercise it. And this good and truth are the flesh and blood of the Lord's glorified Humanity, which we must eat and drink that we may have eternal life; and, if we eat and drink these, we have life in us.

If we do not renounce our evil loves, the Lord's

love cannot be received when we eat the bread which is His body ; and, if we do not renounce our self-intelligence, we cannot receive the Lord's truth when we drink of the cup which is His blood. What is of ourselves must be laid down, that what is of Him may be received and raised up. And we must not believe that life from Him is internally received and appropriated, unless it comes down from the internal into good words and works.

For, as the Lord was raised up that He might come down again to us, and do us more good ; so every good and truth which He imparts to us, and raises up in us, must come down again in doing His works of salvation to men. Love of His good and truth, when expressed, becomes love and good one to another. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

## SERMON VII.

---

### PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Matt. xiii. 1—9. — AND, IN THAT SAME DAY, JESUS, GOING FORTH FROM THE HOUSE, SAT NEAR THE SEA.

IN the preceding chapter, the Lord teaches many things concerning doing the truth ; and requires that it be done from the heart, and not merely externally. This chapter begins by saying, that, in that same day, Jesus went forth from the house, and sat near the sea ; and the meaning is, that the instructions given before, and those which next follow, are applicable to the same state. They were given by the Lord in the same day, that is, in the same state of his Divine Humanity ; and hence they are fitted to the same state of the regeneration of man.

That He went forth from the house, and sat near the sea, signifies such a change as the mind undergoes, when, having been devoted to affections of good, its attention is directed to knowledges of truth. The former instructions were given in a house ; and a house signifies the will, and hence the good which is proper to the will. And those instructions related to doing good from the heart. But the sea, being the grand reservoir of waters, has reference to the

understanding, and to truth in the understanding ; and the teaching which follows has respect to the reception of truth. This shows what kind of a change in the Lord and in men is denoted by going from the house and sitting by the sea.

But the internal purpose of mind, when we are devoted to affections of good, and when devoted to thoughts concerning truths, may be the same. Hence it is said, that Jesus taught concerning both on the same day.

“ And many multitudes gathered together unto Him, so that, going up into a ship, He sat ; and all the multitude stood on the shore.”

When you sit down by the sea, that is, when you compose and settle your mind to thinking on the truths which you know, what a multitude soon gather around you ! A great multitude of the knowledges of truth collect before your view, and they are generally without order, and without purpose. They are not arranged for use ; and, while you look at them on their own level, you know not what to do with them.

But, if your rational mind ascends into some general doctrine in which all these truths are involved, you can look down upon them, and see them individually, and not as a collective mass ; and can see how to arrange them all in due order for use, and apply each to its own purpose, and to the common end.

This process is represented by Jesus' going up into a ship, and the multitude's standing on the shore. He sat in the ship, because sitting was the posture for teaching ; and they stood on the shore, because

standing is the posture for hearing, and being in readiness to obey. The external knowledges of truth in our minds should thus stand, when the doctrine of truth in the internal mind reveals their duty. The things which we know are not to act in us as if they were rules of life, but to stand and hear, and hence obey, what the doctrine of truth commands. Then they will not operate as so many opinions, various and discordant, but will all conspire to the same end.

The true doctrines of the Word are from the light of its spiritual sense. When man possesses these, he knows how to understand the literal sense; for doctrine then serves as a lamp to guide him. But, without true doctrine as a guide, the literal sense is easily made to teach all kinds of heresies. The mere faculty of understanding is not sufficient to enable man to obtain genuine truth from the Word. The understanding needs a guide; and that guide is true doctrine; and this doctrine must be first revealed by one whose mind is opened into heavenly light.

Those, especially, who teach truths from the Word, need to go up into a ship; they need to be in true doctrines. When they are not so, what they derive from the Word, or profess to derive from it, will consist only of their own opinions and speculations as to its meaning. But they who are guided by the true doctrines of the Word can teach the genuine meaning of the Word.

What the Lord taught from the ship consists of several doctrines. The first is the doctrine taught



in the whole Word concerning men's reception of divine truth. It divides men into four classes, according to their different states of reception, and shows how the divine truth is regarded and treated by each class.

“And He spake unto them many things in parables, saying, Behold there went out a sower to sow.”

The Lord spake in parables in order to veil His truth before the minds of those who would have profaned it, and thus have been made worse if it had been more plainly manifested. The covered style of the Word has the same use at this day. If any man is willing to do the Lord's will, he can know true doctrine, and will desire to know it; and then he can understand the meaning of the parables, and other obscure language of the Word. And it is better that others should not understand.

The Lord partially opened the meaning of this and some other parables, that men might know that they all have a spiritual meaning. A more full explanation is now given for those who will receive the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem.

The sower, in the highest meaning of the term, is the Lord; for the seed which is sown is the divine truth. The Lord alone is essential truth, and it proceeds forth from Him as light from the sun. The Word, or Sacred Scripture, is the same divine truth that proceeds as light from the Sun of Righteousness; and when the Lord is spoken of, in respect to the truth or Word which He is and which He imparts, He is often called the Son of Man. Thus,

in the parable of the tares of the field, it is said, "He who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man."

In the lowest sense, every one who teaches truth is a sower. Truth is the seed which he disseminates. The minds of men are the fields in which truths are sown. The remains of good which have been stored in the mind are good ground.

By the earth, or ground, when spoken of in respect to the human mind, are signified the things belonging to the will: hence, all the good and evil of the mind are man's spiritual ground. By waters are signified the things of the understanding: hence, all the truths and falses of the mind are its waters.

Man's natural loves are not called good ground. Sow good seed in the mind of one who is in the exercise of his natural loves, and it will not be well received. The ground will not be open to receive, embrace, warm, and nourish it; and the seed will not spring up, and produce its proper fruits. But sow certain other seeds, and you will see that this natural earth is in a state to receive them. Hence it may be manifest, that man's natural loves are not good earth or ground.

The Lord provides that remains of good shall be implanted or formed in the mind during infancy and childhood, and in all the humble states of manhood. All the kind and innocent affections which are stored up become good ground; and it is into this that the good seed is received, when man is instructed in spiritual truths.

These remarks will assist us to understand the following verses.

“ And, in his sowing, some fell by the way-side ; and the fowls came, and devoured them.”

Those who have no concern about religious truth are they who receive the seed by the way-side. They hardly receive it : they do not receive it into any affections which are living in the way of life ; but they receive it only casually and indifferently by the way-side.

The fowls which come and devour it are their vain conceits and fantasies. Teach the Lord's precepts to one of this class of persons, and he will reason away all their meaning, or make sport of them, and perhaps use them as smart sayings in his common discourse. By such means, a great part of the truths which are imparted to those who are in the conceit of their own intelligence are devoured. They take no root in the remains of good, if any such exist in the mind.

In the exposition which the Lord gives of this verse, He says, “ When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom and understandeth not, the evil cometh, and seizeth upon what was sown in his heart : he is it that was sown by the way-side.”

These vain persons think they understand many things of the Word ; but the Lord does not regard any as truly understanding His truth, who have not love of the truth. Observe what use these foolish persons make of truths in their understandings, — how they pervert and dissipate them, and you will not think they have a good understanding of them.

And when they have so perverted them, the evil

spirits flow in, and seize on the truth, and turn it to evil instead of good of life. These persons grow worse by being instructed; and they seem to be a very numerous class in every community. These constitute the first general class of those who hear the Word of God. The second class are thus described:—

“But others fell upon stony places, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprung up, because it had no depth of earth: but, when the sun arose, it was scorched; and, because it had no root, it withered away.”

Of these the Lord says, “But that which was sown upon stony places is he that heareth the Word, and immediately with joy receiveth it: but he hath not root in himself, but endureth for a while; but, when tribulation and persecution cometh because of the Word, he is immediately scandalized.”

This class of persons have an interest in knowing truth; but they want it as mere knowledge, or for the sake of reputation and worldly gain. They appear much delighted when they first learn the truth, and they readily acquire an external understanding of it; and they frequently manifest so warm a zeal in confessing and proclaiming it, that they pass for eminent disciples.

But they do not receive the truth interiorly. They have little good; there is no depth of earth in which the seed can gain root; and therefore it is said that they have no root in themselves. That their ground is hard and stony is manifest from their morose and contentious spirit. We know that their ground is

stony, because they throw stones at all who dissent from them.

“But, when the sun was up, it was scorched; and, because it had no root, it withered away.”

This has two very distinct meanings. The first and most external is that which is given in the Lord's explanation; viz. that, when tribulation and persecution come because of the Word, they are immediately scandalized.

The literal sense of this needs no explanation; but the Lord's exposition, as well as the parable itself, has an internal sense. By tribulation and persecution are meant the spiritual temptations which arise when man's own evils and his false principles contend against the truths which he has received. Although truths may serve as instruments by which man gains wealth, reputation, and power, and they may be acknowledged while they can be used for these purposes; yet they presently become very troublesome members of an evil man's household. It is not their proper duty to serve, but to rule; and they improve every opportunity, when man's evils are asleep, or enfeebled by surfeiting, to assert, and prepare to assume, their proper authority. And when they have collected their forces, and stand forth in the mind to wage open war against man's evils, they are rejected and abandoned. They have not root enough in good, so as to withstand the assaults of the evils which arise in their wrath.

This arising of man's self-love against the truths in his mind, when he finds that he can no longer use them as servants, but that they contend against his

loves, is signified by the sun's arising. His rejecting the truth, and falling wholly into evil, is signified by his being scandalized.

All those persons who learn and confess the truth, and yet abandon it when they find that their selfish interests are not promoted, but are opposed by it, are of this class who receive the seed in stony ground.

But there is still another important meaning to these words. Some persons receive the truth intellectually, and for a time seem fully to acknowledge it. But when the truth presses close upon them to be obeyed, and brethren draw near with the love of good, and produce a sphere of doing the truth; then they are scorched, and wither away. This is to have the sun of heaven arise; and its heat cannot be borne by those in whom the truth is not deeply rooted. They can live where the truth is merely known and talked of, and every one acts as he pleases; but not where the fruit-producing heat penetrates the recesses of the mind; for they have no depth of earth to receive and bring forth its life. Where the truth impels them to do it, they are scandalized.

There is a general impression among men, that they love and desire to receive the truth; and most of those who really love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, would take it very unkindly, and would not believe it, if they were told that they loved not the truth.

This persuasion is so strong with nearly all of us, that, when we are satisfied that we have obtained

the truth, we suppose it quite impossible that we should ever renounce it. For the same reason, we expect our neighbors who have received the truth to continue in it. But we do not sufficiently consider *how* the truth is received by ourselves and our neighbors. We do not well consider the four different kinds of receivers, and that the truth can permanently remain with only one of them.

There is no reason to believe, that all who learn that the Heavenly Doctrines are true will continue to believe them. Pride of self-intelligence may prevent their openly renouncing them; but the renunciation is real when they make their self-will and their own opinions the rules of life. And this is quite possible to be done, while the doctrines of the church are confessed to be true.

After death it will appear, that the truths of the New Church which have ever entered our minds have all been virtually renounced, except those which we have reduced to life.

“But others fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.”

Of these it is said, “But that which is sown among thorns is he that heareth the Word; and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful.”

Our evil concupiscences are the thorns which spring up, and choke the Word or divine truths. These evil lusts fill us with the cares of the world, and give to riches their deceitful value. When these evil lusts occupy the mind, there can be no influx of heavenly affection for the good of truth; and truth

in the understanding, which is not vivified and kept shining by an affection for applying it to life, soon appears to be choked, and gradually becomes faint, and expires.

Do we not see examples, in which persons appear for a short time to know and acknowledge the truth ; and then their love of riches, pleasures, contentions, reputation, or dominion, rises into activity, and their interest in the truth fades and dies as a plant which receives no nourishment at the root ? The cause is, that the evil loves close the heavens, so that there is no influx of good into the truths in the understanding.

Many who begin to learn the truths of the New Church are of this class. They are interested in these truths in certain states, when their evil affections are less active than usual ; but, when these turn their minds towards self and the world, their affection for the truth ceases.

And these thorns often spring up, and choke the Word, with those who have long possessed it. They are not careful to shun evils as sins ; and evils that arise in the mind, and are not then denied and shunned, always become thorns that choke the Word. Contend as much as you will that you are still a firm believer in the heavenly truths, and strive as hard as you will to keep your knowledge of them complete ; yet, if you indulge enmity towards your neighbor, or live in adultery, or seek after riches as an end, or indulge habitually any other known evil, truths will be choked, and your whole life will bear witness that they become unfruitful.



There is one fact, concerning this class of persons, which needs to be carefully remembered. When the Word is choked in them by their evil concupiscences, and hence their anterior affection for it declines, they have seldom ability to see that their affection for it has abated. They often excite in themselves an external zeal for the truth, to prevent the appearance of their being in evil; and this hypocritical affection for it appears even more sincere to themselves than to their intelligent brethren. It is attended by a nauseous sphere, which often repels those who are in good states of mind; but this sphere is not perceived by themselves, because it is proper to their life.

We cannot therefore judge whether we are receiving the truth among thorns, by inquiring whether our affection for the truth has abated; but we must explore ourselves, and ascertain whether we are living in the indulgence of known evils; and, if we find that we are so living, we may be certain that our interior affection for the truth is diminished, and that the truths we have received are choked. If we then shun the evil as sin against God, we shall soon come into a state in which we can see clearly that the thorns had choked the seed, and caused it to be unfruitful.

These remarks are for those who desire to know how to judge themselves.

“But others fell upon the good earth, and yielded fruit, some an hundred, and some sixty, and some thirty.”

The good ground is the remains of good implanted

in infancy, childhood, and every state of innocence and obedience. Every one who can reflect rationally is able to see, that such ground is necessary to receive truth; for truths are always treated as by the three preceding classes of persons, when there is no interior love of good into which they are received. Such good receives truths as the earth receives seeds; and from the truths it produces good works, as the earth, from seeds, produces fruits. This is the reason why good works are called good fruits, and evil works are called evil fruits.

What commonly pass for good works in civil society are such as are externally useful. But a great part of these are done from selfish and worldly motives. Only a few are done from internal love of good, or from obedience to the commandments. The end which man regards in what he does, and the truths by which he does it, determine its quality. The ground must be good, and the seed good, in order to produce good fruits. There must be genuine love of good, and genuine truths teaching what is good, in order that good works may be produced.

Many say that it is sufficient to have a love of doing good; and that if man have not truths, yet his works are accepted because he meant well. But they might as well say that the quality of the seeds is of no consequence, provided the ground be good. So foolish are they who think that it is of little importance to learn spiritual truths, and that it is sufficient to do good according to their natural ideas.

The text speaks of different amounts of good fruit, produced by different persons; some one hundred, some sixty, and some thirty. Although this literally relates to the quantity, yet spiritually it relates rather to the quality, of the good produced by the different classes of those who have good ground.

There are three classes of good receivers of the Word, as well as three classes of bad receivers. There are, in general, three heavens and three hells; and these are opposites. Every man on earth is internally conjoined with one of these heavens or hells.

When the Lord mentions three classes of evil receivers of the Word, and only one class of good receivers, He still divides this one class into three, by saying, that some of them produce an hundred, some sixty, and some thirty.

Those who produce an hundred are celestial men, and are conjoined with the celestial heaven. They are principled in love of the Lord, or simple love of good for its own sake. With them the seed produces the most fruit, and of the best quality.

The second class, who produce sixty, are spiritual men, and conjoined with the middle heaven. They act from the love of truth, or from charity.

The third class, who produce thirty, are in the external degrees of celestial and spiritual good, which are called celestial-natural and spiritual-natural. These are conjoined with the lowest heaven, which consists of two such classes of angels. For a description of the three heavens and the three hells, see the "Treatise on Heaven and Hell."

Those who receive the seed by the way-side stand in opposition to those who yield thirty; those who receive it on stony ground, to those who yield sixty; and those who receive it among thorns, to those who yield an hundred. Those who receive it by the way-side are therefore conjoined with the hell that is least evil; those who receive it on stony ground are conjoined with the middle hell; and those who receive it among thorns are conjoined with the lowest hell.

Every one who hears or in any way learns divine truth belongs to one of these six classes; and, when we see how few have any desire to learn the genuine truths of the Word, and how many of these turn away before they have reduced the truths to life, we cannot doubt that very many men are evil, and are conjoined with the hells. This accords with Swedenborg's express declarations on the subject.

Doubtless some persons fail of receiving the truths of the New Church from causes which imply little guilt on their part; but our natural affections, and our love of excusing our own imperfections, incline us to extend this favorable judgment too far. The Lord closes this parable respecting the different classes of receivers of the Word, by saying, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear;" and this certainly implies, that all who have a capacity to understand divine truths are under obligation, not only to receive, but to obey them.

The first effect of hearing is understanding; and the second effect, with those who are in a good state, is obeying the truth. Both of these are therefore

required of all to whom the truth is presented. All who have not been long abandoned to evil life have some remains of good. They have enough good ground to give them ability to bear good fruit. When they hear the truth, they can attend to it, and understand certain degrees of it, and obey what they do understand. And this will increase their good ground, and gradually the quality of their good ground will improve. Hence their ability to yield good fruit may continually increase.

These things may be said of almost every one; and, therefore, all who are indifferent to the truth, or who receive and pervert it, are guilty of great wrong. They act against the only means of salvation which the Lord can extend to them; for His power to save them from sin, and give them eternal life, is in His truth; and it can operate in them, only by their receiving His truth and doing it. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

## S E R M O N VIII.

## WHY THE LORD SPAKE IN PARABLES.

Matt. xiii. 10—17. — AND THE DISCIPLES, COMING, SAID TO HIM,  
WHY SPEAKEST THOU UNTO THEM IN PARABLES?

THE disciples represented all who love to learn divine truths that they may do them. All such have a desire to understand the style of the Word. They wish to know why its literal sense is so obscure, or manifests so little heavenly light. They are not like many people at this day, who, because they see no religious meaning in the literal sense, infer that it has no meaning that is important to them; nor are they like another class, who say it is all holy, but evade all inquiries as to its meaning. But, where the Lord's words appear obscure to them, or seem to them obscure to others, they believe there is a good reason for it; and they go to the Word itself to learn the reason. And the inquiries of such persons are answered.

“And He, answering, said to them, Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens; but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, even what

he hath shall be taken away from him. On this account I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, neither understand.”

A few extracts from Swedenborg will explain these verses: —

“All who have acquired to themselves intelligence and wisdom in the world are accepted in heaven, and become angels, every one according to the quality and quantity of intelligence and wisdom; for whatsoever a man acquires to himself in the world, this remains, and he carries it along with him after death; and it is also increased and filled, but within the degree of the affection and desire of truth and its good, but not beyond it. They who have had little of affection and desire receive little, but still as much as they can receive within that degree; but they who have had much of affection and desire receive much. The degree itself of affection and desire is as the measure, which is increased to the full; more, therefore, to him whose measure is great, and less to him whose measure is small. This is meant by the Lord’s words, ‘To every one who hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance.’” H. H. 349.

“In the other life, falses are removed from those who are in truths derived from good; and truths are removed from those who are in falses derived from evil. Thus they who are in truths derived from good are elevated into heaven; and they who are in falses from evil sink down into hell; and, when they are in hell, they are in terror and consternation on account of truths derived from good. That such a state

awaits those who are in falses derived from evil, and those who are in truths derived from good, the Lord teaches in these words, 'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away what he hath.'" A. C. 9330.

"If the Jews had been instructed in the mysteries of faith, they would have perished eternally, because they would have mixed holy things with profane. And this was the reason why the mysteries of faith were not revealed to them, insomuch that it was not openly declared to them [before the Lord's advent], that they should live after death, nor that the Lord should come into the world to save them. Yea, in so great ignorance and stupidity were they kept, and are still kept, that they did not know, nor do they know, that there is an internal man, or that any internal principle is given; for, if they had known, and if they now knew, so as to acknowledge, they are of such a quality that they would profane; and thus they would have no hope of any salvation in the other life." A. C. 301, 302.

These remarks show why the literal sense of the Old Testament was clothed in an obscure style, so that spiritual truths do not plainly appear. It was to prevent the Israelites from receiving a higher and purer order of truth than they could obey. And, for the same reason, most of the Lord's instructions in the New Testament were given in parables.

All actual sin, and positive misery resulting from sin, are from disobedience to known truths; and therefore the Lord, in mercy, guards the Word, that it may not be understood further than men are able



to do it. The Jews, and many other people, are so imbued with evil and false principles, that they would certainly profane all higher degrees of truth than they possess, if they knew them. While they know them not, they have not the sin, and will not have the punishment, of profaning them. They have the sin, and will have the misery, of living in their present evil and false principles; but this is less than would result from profaning more holy degrees of truth.

The more interiorly men receive truth, and the more they reform themselves, or are cleansed and healed by it from their spiritual defilements and diseases, the worse their state becomes if they afterward relapse. "The last state of that man is worse than the first." This appears from a subsequent verse of the text.

The words, "Seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither understand," are thus explained. Seeing has respect to the understanding. In their act of seeing the meaning of the Lord's words, they do not truly see it. This is obvious; for, when they proceed to tell the meaning which they see in the Lord's words, they tell not the true meaning. And, in like manner, in hearing they do not hear; for, when they attempt either to obey or expressly to disobey a divine truth, they generally mistake its meaning. They thus mistake the Word, because it is written in such a manner as to require a different state of mind from theirs to receive its genuine sense. And this is of great mercy, to keep them in ignorance of what they would profane.

"And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah,

which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is become gross, and with their ears they hear heavily, and their eyes have they blinded, lest at any time they should see with the eyes, and hear with the ears, and understand with the heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

Swedenborg remarks, that "the term *hearing* is here used in every sense; denoting to be instructed, to believe, and to obey. Hearing they do not hear, denotes to be taught, and yet not to believe; also to be instructed, and not to obey. With the ears to hear heavily, denotes to refuse instruction, faith, and obedience." A. C. 9311.

In some cases, it is represented that the Lord blinds the eyes of men, lest they should see His truths; and, in other passages, it is expressed that men blind their own eyes. So also it is sometimes said that the Lord hardens their hearts, and sometimes that they harden their own hearts. Some passages of the Word also ascribe anger and revenge to the Lord.

In all such cases, the evil that is attributed to the Lord really belongs to men; and the literal contradiction in the texts arises from the fact, that some of them are written according to the reality of things, and some according to the appearance of things to natural men. It appears to natural men that their wickedness is the result of a kind of necessity produced by the Divine Providence, and this is ascribing it to the Lord. Ten thousand examples, daily before

us and within us, prove this to be the case. When the preacher teaches any duty, a great part of his hearers begin to make excuses. Each finds something in the condition or circumstances under which he is placed which he thinks excuses, and perhaps requires, his continuing to neglect that duty. And this is ascribing his neglect of duty, and his continuance in sin, to the Lord.

That the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in the grossness and blindness of the Jews and others to whom the Gospel comes, signifies spiritually that the Lord, in speaking to them in parables in accommodation to their depraved state, fulfilled that part of the Word which teaches that such persons require divine truth to be veiled in this manner. These words also imply, that the prophecies were written in the same obscure style, to prevent their being understood by those who would profane them.

In proportion as the human race became evil, they became incapable of acknowledging interior orders of truth in their hearts, and of doing them. They still retained the faculty of understanding interior truths; but with them, as with men at this day, their ordinary thoughts and perceptions were rendered gross and obscure by their evil affections. When they did see any truths interiorly, they perverted and falsified them; and every such act of profanation greatly increased their blindness and their sin.

For this reason the Lord guarded the Word to prevent men from seeing its truths in their internal quality, while their minds were so depraved that they would not be kept from profaning them. The

guards thus set to protect the Word — that is, to prevent men from approaching it more nearly than is for their good — are called cherubim. These are meant by the cherubim and a flame of a sword which the Lord placed at the east of the garden of Eden to keep the way of the tree of life. The garden of Eden signifies intelligence or knowledge of heavenly truths. The cherubim are the guards placed by the Lord to prevent men from seeing Him, and the truth of good proceeding from Him, in greater degrees than would be for their good. The flame of a sword denotes the zealous, but ineffectual, efforts of the evil to understand holy things. Such persons often strive hard to enter into the meaning of the Word. They thrust their thoughts violently in every direction, as the flame of a sword turned every way; but their sensual loves perpetually turn their thoughts away from the interior things of the Word, and thus prevent their finding and profaning holy things.

The spiritual truths of the Word are also mostly covered with natural truths, and even descriptions of sensual and worldly things, to which the affections and thoughts of evil men are readily attracted. When they read the Word, their minds are drawn to these things; and many are quite satisfied with them, and do not want to find any thing more heavenly. Thus they are guarded against discovering what they would profane.

In some parts of the Word, the literal sense consists of natural expressions, arranged in such order as to the natural man appears perfect disorder. Such is the style of many of the prophecies. And

by this means a guard is set to protect the Word from profanation.

There are angels also attendant on every man, whose kind office it is to open and close his understanding according to the states of his affections. They open it to see divine truths, or, what is the same thing, they present divine truths to the understanding, when the affections are in a good state; and they close the interiors of the understanding, or withdraw heavenly truths, when the affections are in an evil state.

Thus there are many kinds of cherubim or guards set for the defence of the tree of life. But let none think that the Lord thus guards the internal truths of the Word, from any unwillingness that man should receive them, and have eternal life; but He protects the tree of life, lest man eat of its fruit, and live for ever the life that is spiritual death. Although the Lord provides that the Word shall be defended so as not to be intelligible to the evil, yet He provides for its being opened to the good. To His disciples He says,

“Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.”

Just in proportion as man shuns evils as sins, he has a good understanding; the interior faculties of his intellect are opened, and are turned upward towards heaven to receive truth thence. And there are always many aids afforded, both natural and spiritual, to those who seek the way of life, that they may walk in it.

To see, when it relates to the true disciples of the

Lord, signifies to understand, and to have faith ; and to hear or hearken, signifies to assent to with the will, and to do. And the things which the disciples saw and heard, mean the interior truths which are revealed to those who will have faith in them and do them. Their blessedness is the heavenly happiness which there is in living in the truth from love and faith.

Before the Lord came into the world and formed to Himself a Humanity in which He can be present with men, and guard them against profaning His truth, and open their minds to receive it, — before this, they had far less ability to receive interior truth without profaning it, than they have since His coming. The great power which He took to Himself, and employed for the good of men, is displayed principally in rendering it safe for them to receive His truth more fully than they could before He glorified His Humanity. By bringing His divine love and wisdom down more fully into the presence of spirits and men, He caused them to distinguish between good and evil more perfectly ; and then the power of His truth separated between the good and the evil in the world of spirits, and thus executed a judgment. By this the power of the evil spirits over the minds of men was greatly diminished, and the power of the good over the minds of men was greatly increased.

And, as the Word was made flesh and dwelt among men, so it now dwells in them far more than before the incarnation. The Lord is with us always — He is God with us — in a sense in which

He was not before He assumed and glorified His Humanity. The Divine Spirit of Truth which He now imparts from His Humanity, and which could not be given before His glorification, is the Holy Spirit. And this Spirit of Truth guides men into all truth. It is itself the divine truth brought down more fully to man's state, and having power to protect him while he enters into the light of spiritual truth.

On account of this increase of divine protection, the Lord, when He glorified His Humanity, also revealed truths more plainly than before. Hence is the difference between the New Testament and the Old. Every one knows that spiritual truth appears far more distinctly in the New. Still a covering was necessary, although it is thinner and more transparent; and the reason why spiritual truths could not be revealed without any covering, when the Lord was in the world, was because the protecting power of His Divine Humanity could not then be brought into full operation.

No heaven had then been formed of those who were regenerated by believing in, and living the life of, the Divine Humanity. Hence there was an essential deficiency of the requisite mediums for the descent of the Holy Spirit. And until a heaven could be formed of those who acknowledged the Lord in his Divine Humanity, and until such a heaven should come down with its protecting and vivifying power into the minds of men, their minds could not bear to have spiritual truths wholly unveiled.

Such a heaven has been partially formed since the Lord's advent. It has been formed principally from those who have died in infancy ; but partly from all those who have believed the Lord to be the Son of God, and not a person separate from the Father, and who have lived in charity according to the commandments. It is through this new heaven that the Lord now manifests Himself to form His New Church ; and in the New Church His promise is to be fulfilled, "The time cometh when I will speak no more in proverbs."

Now His protecting and enlightening power is so great, that men can bear to have the internal sense of the Word revealed. They may now safely enter into the mysteries of faith, provided they will endeavor to shun evils as sins ; and the wicked are guarded against entering into them, although they are plainly revealed. We say they are guarded ; but this does not mean, that the guard is so complete that they cannot receive any of the truths, and profane them ; but that they are very much guarded. This is obviously true from the fact, that those who read or hear the truths of the New Church in an unfriendly state of mind scarcely ever understand any of them. But some read in a friendly state, and thus learn many truths, and afterward relapse into evil life, and profane them. Such persons cannot be protected, because they turn rebels against the truth, after they have received its protection. They are therefore guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

The partial removal of the veil from the Word, when the Lord was on earth, effected so great an



increase of light, that what is said in the next verse of our text was literally true : —

“ For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and just men have desired to see what ye see, and have not seen ; and to hear what ye hear, and have not heard.”

Even those who were in truth and good, who are meant by prophets and just men, could not be safely admitted to a view of spiritual truths before the Lord came, and executed a judgment, and glorified His Humanity ; for, had they seen them, they could not then have been kept in an acknowledgment of them. And, if spiritual truths had been openly revealed, the evil would have treated them as they treated the Lord while on earth, and have perished eternally. Hence the prophets, who were mediums of the truths of the Word of the Old Testament, did not see them. They spake and wrote as they were moved, and not according to any judgment or will of their own.

It is not to be understood, that this difficulty and danger in understanding spiritual truth existed from the beginning ; but it began with the fall, and increased till the time of the Lord's coming in the flesh. Neither could it then be wholly overcome. Men could receive protection in understanding the internal truths of the Word, only in proportion as they came into the acknowledgment, that the Humanity of the Lord is Divine, and that He is the true God and eternal life. And, before a church on earth could be formed in which this acknowledgment could be explicit and full, it was necessary that a heaven should be formed of those who were saved by this

acknowledgment and correspondent life. The former heavens were not proper mediums of this faith and life. They were of a different genius from men after the Lord's advent. They were from races of men in whom all truth and good had respect to Him who was to come; and it was necessary to have a heaven of those who were conceived and born and educated in the acknowledgment of the Lord as having come, and glorified his Humanity, and become the Saviour of the world.

For the want of such a heaven as a protecting medium, the Christian church has hitherto known but very imperfectly who the Lord Jesus Christ is; and the ignorance and doubt in respect to Him have been accompanied, and are now accompanied, by equal ignorance and doubt respecting the internal truth of the Word.

Those at this day who believe that He is a mere man, also debase the Word to the level of human compositions. A great portion of it they regard as antiquated; as applicable to ages of less light than the present, but as nearly or quite useless at this day. It is uncommon for them to derive from it any truth which savors of spirituality; and the degree of good which they see by its light is but little above what the Jews saw. The Jews saw nothing to be good but bodily health, plentiful harvests, dominion over their enemies, riches, and sensual pleasures. Their knowledge and their loves were wholly devoted to this world. And those at this day who deny the Divinity of the Lord and his Word regard men's natural selfish loves as good

loves, and the gratification of these loves as genuine good. This is the good which they see in the light of the Word ; and this shows that they are blind in respect to the spiritual truths of the Word, and that they, like the Jews, profane its natural truths.

The same remarks apply to others at this day, in proportion as they fail of acknowledging the Lord to be the true and only God. They fail in the same degree of entering into the spiritual truths of the Word. To them the Word is still veiled ; it is still spoken in parables and dark sayings, as of old. And, as the Jews thought the Lord had a devil and was mad, because He brought forth spiritual truth and good in his instructions and life ; so men at this day proclaim the same against all who receive the spiritual good and truth of the Word.

This shows very plainly that the Word is still protected. Although it is now plainly revealed that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only God of heaven and earth, and the spiritual sense of the Word is brought forth and written and preached with as much distinctness and clearness as possible, yet over all the glory there is still a covering. The cherubim fulfil their office more perfectly than ever before. Although the external veil is removed from the Word, and it is thus rendered easy for those who love the light to enter in and see the glory of the holy city, yet it is so guarded that there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. And we see, that, under this restraint, by far the greater part — nearly all — of those to whom the heavenly truths are pre-

sented, stare at them as spectres, reject them as enemies, and declare that they have a devil and are mad.

This is of infinite mercy ; for it is far more dangerous to receive the truths of the New Church without obeying them, than to receive such external truths as were previously revealed. These spiritual truths enter into, and explore, and dwell in the inmost recesses of the mind ; and, if these are profaned, the whole mind becomes a hell. But the damage by profaning external truths is mostly limited to the exteriors of the mind, and is comparatively small.

When the truths of the New Church are taught and acknowledged openly, and all are left in entire freedom in respect to receiving them, it is rarely the case that any one will embrace them who will afterward profane them. But there are two cautions necessary to be given in this place ; and they ought to be well considered and remembered.

The first caution is against using natural arts of persuasion to induce any person to receive the Heavenly Doctrines. If we present riches, honors, or the favors of our friendship, as inducements to any persons to read, hear, and embrace these truths, we may thereby insinuate many truths into their minds, when they have no good ground to receive them. Such affections as are thus excited are not good ground, and what is thus received will be in great danger of profanation.

These remarks do not apply to children. It is the duty of parents to cause their children to learn

these truths ; and the obedience which children render to their parents in learning them, does form good ground.

The second caution is against teaching and receiving these truths as mere knowledges. From the very commencement of teaching or receiving them, the duty of applying them to the life is to be placed as a frontlet between the eyes, and as a sign on the hand. To devote a sermon or a conversation to showing what is true, without directing the mind to the good for the sake of which the truth is given, is not allowable. The good of life which the truth teaches should always be the end ; and this end should be kept full in view whenever the truth is taught or learned.

Faith alone is nothing, and charity alone is nothing ; but the union of the two, and nothing else, is religion.

If this had always been duly considered and regarded by teachers and learners of the Heavenly Doctrines, we should not now see so many believers of the doctrines who are scandalized when the duty is urged of applying them to life. There is no measure to the harm that is done, by filling the mind with spiritual truths, without the good of those truths.

Teach the truths openly, and confess them distinctly and fully, and do them wholly, at all times and in all places where it is proper for you to live. They will protect you and themselves against damage, by producing the proper separation between him that feareth God, and him that feareth Him not.

And those who will not receive them in the love of doing them will be protected by their own blindness. And let us not persuade them by any appeals to their selfish interests, nor give them any idea that it would be useful for them to know the truth, without doing it. Let us leave them in true freedom; and be thankful, if they cannot believe the truth and do it, that they are protected against profaning it.

“ In that same hour, Jesus was glad in spirit, and said, I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and intelligent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

## S E R M O N IX.

## THE PARABLE OF THE TARES OF THE FIELD,

Matt. xiii. 24—30. — ANOTHER PARABLE PUT HE FORTH UNTO THEM, SAYING, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKENED UNTO A MAN WHICH SOWED GOOD SEED IN HIS FIELD.

IN the explanation of this parable which the Lord gave, He says, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seed are the sons of the kingdom, the tares are the sons of the evil. The enemy that soweth them is the devil, the harvest is the consummation of the age, and the reapers are the angels."

The field is the church of the Lord in the heavens and in the earths. The good seed, which are said to be the sons of the kingdom, signify the truths of heaven and the church. Truths are sons; and the kingdom of the Lord, which is heaven and the church, is the spiritual mother, who receives these truths from the Lord, and from whom they are born as sons. The Lord, when spoken of as being the truth, and as imparting it, and as ruling and judging men by it, is often called the Son of Man; and it is He who is meant by the man who sowed the good seed

in the field, or who imparts truths to heaven and the church.

In order that we may not take a larger field than we can compass in a single discourse, we must limit our attention to the Christian church established by the Lord and His apostles.

In this field the Son of Man sowed good seed, or spiritual truths. Some of these truths were naked, or openly revealed; and others were covered, or veiled. Some were like wheat made ready for use, and some were like the seeds still covered with the husks. From what was divested of its covering, men might well infer that it was all good wheat. It was a fair sample of the whole. And those who desired this, and ate it, and were nourished by it, would seek to obtain more of the same kind; and they, knowing the difference between wheat and its husks, could easily separate them, and receive a constant supply of good seed. But those who did not relish the wheat would prefer the husks, or the mixture of wheat and chaff; and the husks served the wheat for shelter and protection against those who would profane it.

“But, while men slept, His enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.”

Where the Lord says that the good seed are the sons of the kingdom, He also says that the tares are the sons of the evil. The internal mind of man is called heaven, and the external mind is called earth and sea. In this earth and sea reside all man's evil and false principles. The good seed, or sons of the kingdom, therefore signify the spiritual truths



belonging to man's internal mind. The tares are the falsities arising from the evils of man's external mind. They are called the sons of the evil; meaning that they are the offspring of the evil part of man's mind, and that is his external or natural mind.

The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The evils and falsities of the external mind flow in from hell or the devil, as goods and truths flow into the internal mind from the Lord out of heaven.

Remember that the field is the church; and then say that the Son of Man implanted in it spiritual truths, flowing in through the heavens and the internal minds of men; and that falsities also were sown in the church, flowing in through the external minds of men from hell.

The tares were sown while men slept. When men's affections are engaged in doing good, their understandings are awake to see and apply spiritual truth; but when their charity, or love of good, ceases, their spiritual sight is closed, and they are said to be asleep. The natural man is often said in the Word to be asleep, and the spiritual man awake. To awake out of sleep is to pass from a state of attention to natural things to a state of interest in spiritual things. Those who are ignorant of spiritual truths are said generally to be asleep, because their eyes are not open to see them.

After the good seed was sown in the church, there were still many persons whose hearts were selfish and worldly: they kept in natural states of mind, and hence were spiritually asleep. And while they loved not spiritual truth, and their eyes were closed in

respect to it, falsities would flow in from hell; for, while men indulge their evil, natural loves, false principles will flow from them as naturally as smoke and flame from natural fire. This is the origin of heresies in the Christian church, and this is what both produces and perpetuates heresies at this day. The great majority of men are spiritually asleep, — so fast asleep that they know not that the Sun of Righteousness has again risen on the earth.

While men are in such natural states, false principles flow into their minds, and even gain dominion there when they observe it not. This is meant by the secret manner in which the tares were sown, which is indicated by the enemy's sowing them and departing while men slept.

“And when the blade sprung up, and brought forth fruit, there appeared the tares also.”

This signifies, that, when truth grew and produced good, falses from evil were intermixed. This has reference to the early ages of the church, and to early states in the regeneration of individuals; for such states are indicated by “when the blade sprung up.”

The church had seasons of wakefulness; and in every age some were awake, while others slept. The good seed, therefore, sprung up, and produced some good fruit; but the history of the church shows that tares were early sown, and that they sprung up even in the first ages of the church.

“And the servants of the householder coming, said to Him, Lord, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? Whence, then, hath it tares? And

He said to them, A man, an adversary, hath done this.”

The householder, or father of the family, signifies the Lord. The servants signify those who are in truths from good. They, perceiving the false doctrines that sprung up, and knowing that the Word of the Lord could contain only truths, were perplexed with the inquiry whence these falsities could originate. They were the more embarrassed with this question, because all who brought forth or received false doctrines contended that they were from the Word, and they confirmed them by numerous texts from the Word. They all professed, also, to be sincere and devout seekers for the truth; and they strongly contended that they ought to be tolerated, and allowed equal rights with those who dissented from them.

The grand question which the true servants of the Lord were then prompted to ask, and which has constantly occurred ever since, was, whether false doctrines should be ascribed to evil of heart. Those who have held false doctrines have always contended that their origin was good; that they were in the love of truth and good, and by these were led to their doctrines.

But the Lord, when interrogated on this subject, has always answered, that a man, an adversary, hath done this. His Word teaches to all who are in a state to learn its real meaning, that tares, or false principles, originate in the evils of the external mind; in those evils which close man's spiritual eyes, and make him judge of spiritual things by natural light.

The Lord teaches this, not only by His answer in this parable, but very openly in many texts which ascribe the blindness of men to their love of evil, and in all places where He teaches that it is necessary to do His will in order to hear His words or know His doctrine. But the great difficulty is, that those who believe falsities, or are in darkness, think they believe truths, or are in the light. They say, "We see." Hence their falsities must be removed, before they can be shown that their falsities were from evil.

It has, indeed, been generally known and acknowledged, that the Scripture ascribes the falsities of men to their evils; but each sect has applied this truth to censuring other sects, without seeing its application to themselves. A sect, however, has arisen, and gained great celebrity at this day among the lovers of spiritual sleep, who say that the tares were not sown by a man, an adversary. They not only hold that their own doctrines, even if they are false, are not from evil, but they say the same in respect to the doctrines of others which they believe to be false. And, because they extend this favorable judgment to others, they call themselves liberal and charitable.

Those who have known that the false doctrines in the church are from the evils of the natural mind, have been inclined to ask the next question in the text: "The servants said unto Him, Wilt thou that we go and gather them up?"

When this question has been asked by the true servants of the Lord, they have received and obeyed the answer, — "Nay; lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat together with them."

But a great many persons ask questions of the Lord to which they have already prepared answers in their own minds; and then they make Him sanction their own falsities.

Persons of this class have pretended that the Lord required them to gather up the tares, to collect and punish and destroy those who held false doctrines. Hence the origin of persecutions.

In the next verse the Lord says, "Let both grow together till the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but bring together the wheat into my barn."

He afterward says: "The harvest is the consummation of the age, and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the tares are gathered together and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the consummation of this age. The Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather together out of His kingdom all things that scandalize [all scandals], and those that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

By the harvest, or consummation of the age, is meant the last time, or end of the Christian church, — not of the true Christian church, but of that external form of it instituted when the Lord was in the world, which was only preparatory to the true Christian church, signified by the New Jerusalem. In the common English translation of the Word, the reading is, "The harvest is the end of the world;" and from this very erroneous translation many of us have been led to suppose there would be a period

when this material world would be destroyed ; and that the Christian church would last till that period, and then have its judgment. The same has been inferred from the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, where the same expression occurs. But, in all cases, this and similar expressions have reference to the closing period of the Christian church, when the Lord executed a judgment in the world of spirits on all who had died from the commencement of the Christian church, and who had not been previously judged.

The introduction of these tares as falsities into the church, and their growth, and ultimate ascendancy over all true principles, were what brought the church to its end.

The wheat and the tares, or truths and falsities, were to be permitted to grow together till the harvest, or end of the church ; and then those who were principled in falsities were to be separated from those who were in truths, and were to be associated together in communities according to their qualities, and then let down into hells of similar qualities. This is meant by their being gathered together, and bound in bundles, and cast into the furnace of fire. The collecting together of all who were in truth from good, and elevating them into heaven, is signified by gathering the wheat into the barn. For a particular account of this judgment, see the exposition of the fourteenth chapter of the Revelation in the "Apocalypse Revealed," or the book on the "Last Judgment," or the chapter on the "Consummation of the Age" in the True Christian Religion.

It is said that the reapers are the angels ; but, in the internal sense, angels signify divine truths. The name *angel* signifies any thing that is *sent* ; and the divine truths proceeding or sent forth by the Lord are what reveal the qualities of spirits, and separate the evil from the good. The spirits who are called angels are so called because they receive divine truths, and are mediums through which truths are manifested, and perform their offices.

The decision of the Lord, that the tares should not be separated from the wheat, but that both should be permitted to grow together until the harvest, is sometimes misunderstood, especially by those who have a personal interest in the toleration of false principles. Such persons sometimes infer from this text, that they need not take pains to discover and remove the false principles in their own minds ; but may let them remain till the end of life, when they will be separated from them and destroyed.

But the text does not teach that we must not pluck up the tares from our own minds, but only that we must not endeavor by force to separate them from others. Swedenborg remarks, that “no one can be forced to believe contrary to what he thinks from his heart to be true.” And this shows the folly, as well as wickedness, of endeavoring to produce uniformity of faith by the application of rewards and punishments.

But every man is able, in some degree, to force himself. He cannot immediately compel himself to believe what he does not now believe ; but he can deny and compel himself to shun the evils of his

natural mind. He can thus expel the enemy that sows the tares; and, if some are already sown, they will soon wither and die, when the enemy that sowed them is removed, and ceases to nourish them. True doctrine teaches that it is every man's duty thus to compel himself. If he does so, many of his false principles will be separated from him in the present life; and the rest will not be internally united to his loves, and may easily be separated after death. But the false principles of those who do not shun evils as sins cannot be separated from them after death; for, if they were, others like them would immediately flow from their evil loves. The essential of a man is his will or ruling love; and, if that continues evil till the end of life, it will bind his evil loves in the same bundle with his falsities, and will itself be a furnace of fire.

Some have also inferred from this text, that we ought not to make any distinction in a Christian community between those who hold true doctrines, and those who hold false doctrines. They say that all should be permitted to grow together until they come to their final judgment. This is true to some extent, but not so far as the wicked would have it. So evil men would have the restraints of the civil law removed, under the pretence that they have as good a right to do as they please, as good men have to do as they please. But in the Lord's kingdom we find nothing of such a doctrine of equal rights.

It is true that those who hold false principles should be permitted to live, and should not be persecuted and punished, unless they make disorder in



the community. The means of spiritual instruction are also to be extended to them; and, in all respects, they are to be treated with love for their spiritual good. But this does not imply, that they should be esteemed or treated like men who believe and do the truth.

Those whose minds are made insane as to spiritual things by falsities are called in the Word *drunkards*; and, if you know how natural drunkards ought to be esteemed and treated, you can easily infer your duty in respect to spiritual drunkards.

The reason given in the text, why the tares should not be separated from the wheat before the harvest, is, "Lest, while ye gather together the tares, ye root up the wheat together with them."

Such is the effect of endeavoring by force to remove the false principles of others. It destroys their freedom; and then good and truth cease to live and operate, as well as evil and falsity. It is very certain that all the persecutions in the Christian church, on account of religious opinions, have had more effect to root up the wheat than the tares. Those who held true doctrines, and yet received and indulged the spirit of persecution, lost their true faith, because they lost their charity. In gathering up the tares of their neighbors, they rooted up the wheat in themselves.

As a further explanation of the Lord's direction, that both the tares and the wheat should be permitted to grow together till the harvest, let us view this world in connection with the spiritual, and make the following statement: —

The field in which the Lord sowed good seed is the church on earth. What is sown here grows up into the spiritual world, as what is literally sown in the earth grows up into the air. Something of the growth from spiritual seed is seen on earth; but what we see is to be called rather the roots than the stem and fruit. These appear principally in the spiritual world.

From the Christian church where the Lord had sowed the good seed, thoughts and affections, and persons also, were continually shooting up into the world of spirits; and the Lord's servants there had abundant reason to complain that tares appeared among the wheat.

Those who came from this world into the world of spirits, and were internally evil, and hence internally in falses from evil, but for selfish ends assumed the form of godliness, and were externally engaged in useful labors, and in teaching men to live well, and who could be made also to conform to rules of external order, — these are the persons who are meant by the tares. It is obvious that their whole lives were but falsities, for they were externally one thing, and internally another; and such falsity is what is specifically meant, in the abstract sense, by tares.

This also seems to correspond to the literal meaning of tares. The Greek word *zizania*, which is rendered tares, is said to occur nowhere but in this place. No Greek writing contains it; and much difficulty has hence occurred in finding its meaning. From the best we can collect, it appears to be a

plant much resembling wheat, but containing seeds of an evil quality. It is commonly called darnel; but the Arabic name is zizania, which term the Lord adopted. The remarks of one writer respecting it are too striking to be omitted: "The darnel is well known to the people of Aleppo. It grows among corn. If the seeds remain mixed with the meal, they render a man drunk by eating the bread. The reapers do not separate the plant; but, after the thrashing, they reject the seeds by means of a fan or sieve."

This description has such decided marks of truth, that the mind can hardly doubt its correctness, except as to a part of the process of separating the darnel.

Its external resemblance to wheat furnishes a reason why no attempt should be made to separate it till harvest, when the quality of its fruit, and thus its internal quality, is disclosed. Hence, also, in the spiritual sense we may see the reason why men on earth should not be permitted to judge such persons. *And it will appear that the text does not refer to those who manifest their evil and false principles, as thorns and thistles.* It is not said that such may grow with the wheat till the harvest.

But there is a much higher meaning to all this. When those persons, who were signified by the tares, were collected in great numbers in the world of spirits, they formed to themselves religious and civil establishments, in which they manifested all things which they thought constituted heaven. These were far more extensive and powerful and glorious than

any kingdom of men ever was on the earth. The inhabitants conducted well externally ; for all such as made disturbance were separated, and cast into hell.

And such was the show of goodness among this class of men, that many simple-minded spirits who were in internal good thought these tares to be wheat, and associated themselves with them, and so continued till the consummation of the age. These tares also allied themselves to the angels of the lowest heaven, who, being very simple minded, could not explore their interior quality. And, indeed, so intimate was the association between them, that they could not be separated while the tares retained their resemblance to wheat.

The religious and civil institutions, and the external professions and life of these persons, were such that their communities appeared as heavens ; and not only they, but others who could not see their internals, thought them to be heavens. And these are meant by the former heaven which passed away.

But, though they appeared as wheat, they were tares. Externally they were conjoined with the lower heaven, but internally they were conjoined with hell. At the consummation of the age, when the Lord sent forth His angels, or revealed His divine truths among them, to explore them, and bring to light their internal characters, they ceased to appear as heavens. And then the good among them were separated, and the lower heavens were glad to be delivered from all alliance with them ;

and then, in immense numbers, they sunk down into hell.

If they had been gathered up sooner, and consigned to their own place before their internal quality was disclosed, the angels of the lower heaven, and the good who were among them, would have suffered essential damage. The separation could not have been borne, while the tares were so conjoined with the wheat. And, if disorder and damage had been produced in the lower heaven by separating the tares, the higher heavens must have suffered also ; for the ultimate heaven is as the basis and support of the others. This is a very great reason why the tares should not be separated from the wheat till the harvest, or consummation of the age.

The question may be asked, why could not truth have been revealed sooner, so as to disclose the true quality of these persons, and bring them into a state in which their externals and internals would agree, and thus separate them from all the good ?

It is not to be supposed that we can comprehend this matter, except very imperfectly. We can, however, see that it is according to the established order in which every thing is created and is perpetuated. In the vegetable world, every thing has its circle of life, — its springing, its state of full growth, and its concluding state, in which all but the seed decays and is separated.

Animals have an annual cycle of life, resembling vegetables, and a general cycle resembling that of men, except that their life ceases at death.

Men pass through the several states of childhood,

of manhood, and of old age. The end, or consummation, is death. Then the husk is separated from the kernel, the natural from the spiritual; and the essential part commences a new order of life. But, with some kinds of men, neither the best nor the worst,—as with some kinds of grain,—there are inner husks or coatings, which are not cast off at death. Of these we shall speak again.

Men in their collective capacities, as nations, kingdoms, and churches, have their rise, their meridian glory, and their consummation; and when in their growth, or in the firmness of their manhood, their internal composition and quality are not discoverable; but, at their consummation, are disclosed their riches and their poverty, their strength and their weakness, their good and their evil.

So, likewise, there is a grand cycle of human life, embracing the full period from one judgment to another. Within this a church is established on earth, and passes through its various states to its end. All who go from this world to the world of spirits within that period, and are not ready for judgment, are brought into a state within this period to cast off all their husks or coverings, and to be externally what they are internally.

This grand cycle, or period, is what is called by the Lord *an age*. When He was on earth, He brought one age to its consummation. The former church ceased, and all who remained in the world of spirits were judged. Then commenced the new age, or the age of the Christian church. This had its end, or consummation, in 1757; and this is the

consummation of the age referred to in the New Testament.

A new age has now commenced ; and it is provided that spirits shall not collect in such numbers in the world of spirits as during former ages.

The tares are sooner separated from the wheat. The ages are shorter. None are permitted to remain more than thirty years in the world of spirits. The spiritual Sun is brought nearer to men and spirits, and the periods of their revolutions are shortened.

The reasons why many establishments of the Old Church still remain on earth are similar to those already given for the delay of judgments. It takes some time for a judgment to descend into the externals of the church, without destroying the wheat with the tares.

The last words connected with the text had their fulfilment in the spiritual world, when the tares were separated from the wheat ; and they will be fulfilled on earth, when the corresponding judgment has been fully executed : “ Then shall the just shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

## SERMON X.

## THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD-SEED.

Matt. xiii. 31, 32. — ANOTHER PARABLE PUT HE FORTH TO THEM, SAYING, THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS IS LIKE UNTO A GRAIN OF MUSTARD-SEED, WHICH A MAN TAKING SOWED IN HIS FIELD: WHICH, INDEED, IS THE LEAST OF ALL SEEDS; BUT WHEN IT IS GROWN IT IS GREATER THAN HERBS, AND BECOMETH A TREE, SO THAT THE BIRDS OF HEAVEN COME, AND MAKE THEIR NESTS IN ITS BRANCHES.

THE mustard of Palestine does not differ materially from the same plant in this country; and it is very obvious, that neither the plant nor the seed answers to the description in the text. A great deal of learned labor has been bestowed to ascertain what plant is here meant; but nothing satisfactory has been determined. We do not see that the question is of much importance. If the plant were simply named in the text, without any description of it, it would be important to obtain a description; but the text teaches us respecting it all that is necessary for understanding the spiritual sense of the parable.

When it is said that the kingdom of the heavens is like certain natural objects and operations, the meaning is, that these natural things correspond to certain spiritual things which occur in the work of regenera-



tion; for regeneration is the work of forming the kingdom of God within men.

Men in their natural state have no spiritual good, and hence no natural love of spiritual truth. The good ground is formed by education; but only a little of it, and that of a very inferior quality, is formed while men generally love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

Because there is little good ground, only a few of the good seeds, or divine truths, which are sown in the mind, fall into good ground. Some fall by the way-side, some on stony ground, and some among thorns. And, because there is so little truth, and it is so much less in the mind than falsities and merely natural scientifics, therefore it is called the least of all seeds. This refers to the state of man while he is yet natural, and before he is made spiritual. All there is in him of the kingdom of the heavens is that least of all seeds.

The Lord's merciful providence is infinitely careful of this little seed, and waters and nourishes it with the rains and dews and sunshine of heaven. He guards it with His cherubim and the flame of a sword. And, so far as it can be done without destroying man's freedom, He induces man to permit it to spring up and grow, and occupy the field.

It presently becomes greater than all herbs. All the truths and falsities which have been sown in the mind, and have sprung up or been brought forth into operation, are called herbs. And, when the divine truth that has been sown in the mind has sprung up, and has become the governing principle or law of

man's conduct, then it is said to be greater than herbs ; meaning that it is greater, or has more power, than the principles of the natural mind.

Every one has arrived at this state who makes the divine truth, and not his self-intelligence, the rule of his life ; and every such person can look back and see that truth has been in his mind in the state when it was the least of all the seeds in his field. He cannot so well see how it has sprung up and grown, and acquired its present greatness ; but he can understand this better, now it is done, than when it had not grown.

But, after the divine truth has acquired root, and grown up to be the highest authority of the mind, there is still much work for it to do. This work is described in other places, but not in this parable, except by very general expressions. But every one may see, that it must gain possession of the whole field ; and many things are there which urge the strong claim of possession, and abandon it not without fighting for their firesides and their altars.

The leading object of this parable is to show how good seed is increased in the process of regeneration. Before it can be greatly multiplied, the seed must not only spring up and become an herb, but must become a tree, and produce fruit in which is the same kind of seed. And then, as trees are multiplied from a single seed, and fruit and seeds are immensely increased by continual reproduction, so it is with the increase of goods and truths in the mind of one who has truly become a man.

Truths and goods are not thus increased, or multi-

plied and fructified, until the herb has become a tree, and bears fruit ; that is, until the truth is united to good, and becomes man's life, — becomes the man. By a tree is meant man ; and as the seed produces the tree, so the divine seed or truth produces the regenerate man.

The following passage is from Swedenborg : —

“ With man who is in good, — that is, in love and charity, — seed from the Lord is so fructified and multiplied that it cannot be numbered for multitude : not so whilst he lives in the body, but in the other life incredibly. For, so long as man lives in the body, the seed is in corporeal ground, and is there amongst things twisted and dense, which are scientifics and pleasures, and also cares and solitudes ; but, when these are put off, as is the case when he passes into the other life, the seed is loosened from them and grows, as the seed of a tree is wont when it rises out of the ground to grow into a shrub, also into a great tree, and next to be multiplied into a garden of trees. For all science, intelligence, and wisdom, with their delights and happiness, thus fructify and are multiplied, and thereby increase to eternity, and this from the least seed, as the Lord teaches concerning the grain of mustard-seed ; and it is manifest, from the science, intelligence, and wisdom of the angels, which was to them ineffable at the time they were men.” A. C. 1941.

We can obtain in this life but a very indistinct and imperfect conception of the great increase of intelligence which is given to good men, when they have left the world, and are admitted into their proper

societies in heaven. In this world, knowledge is obtained through vocal speech, reading, and personal reflection and experience. If every man in the world could communicate to you all the knowledge he possesses which your mind is capable of comprehending, and could do it by merely thinking it, without the natural labor of speaking and writing, how immense and immediate would be the increase of your intelligence! In the spiritual world, men not only have ability to communicate all they know in this manner, but they have no ability to conceal it. They can explore and read each other's minds at a glance.

The light of heaven is not a mere natural correspondent of the light of divine truth, but is itself the light of divine truth. While our minds are in natural light, we see spiritual things by a kind of inference from their correspondence with natural things; but, after death, we shall see nothing but spiritual things, and our minds will be wholly in the sphere of their existence. And the light in which angels think and see transcends the light of this world so immensely, that no comparison will give an idea of its excellence. The intelligence of the angels is from that light; and the apparent or external light with them is only in proportion to the internal light of their minds.

When any one from the earth is added to any heavenly society, he comes into the common light of that society. All the truths known in each society are known to all its members, and the new comer immediately receives the whole. All in a society

do not understand each truth in the same degree, for there are different orders of minds; but all understand the common truths according to their capacities. The blood which circulates through the man gives life to every member, and each receives it according to his quality and office.

When we consider that men may be regenerated in the present life, and some even to the seventh state; and when our thoughts dwell on the high attainments of men in the advanced states of regeneration, we are liable to fall into some mistakes. We are not accustomed to suppose that any persons with whom we are acquainted have advanced to the higher degrees of regeneration; and we judge of the condition and qualities of those who have so advanced by reasoning from truths of doctrine. But we are liable to reason incorrectly, because our reasonings relate to things of which we have no living and personal experience.

We may be much mistaken as to the degree of wisdom and goodness which men at this day would manifest, if they were regenerated, in respect to both the will and the understanding. The quality of the world around them, the essentially gross and perverse state of their bodies and the exteriors of their minds, render it exceedingly difficult for heavenly principles which have taken root to come forth and manifest themselves with any vigor. They grow in a soil hard and unfriendly, and in a climate cold and blasting.

And say not, that, if any one were truly regenerated, all these things in respect to him would be

reformed. These external things yield but slowly, and complete reformation is not effected with them as soon as heavenly principles gain root and an abiding existence in the mind. Many persons have experience which would teach them this, if they knew how to read it; and it is important for their strength and comfort that they should know how to interpret such experience.

To those in whom the divine truths have taken root, and who honestly endeavor to bring them forth into word and deed, we may safely say, that their efforts to speak and do the truths are attended with but partial success. When their endeavors are sincere and resolute, they impart or speak but few of the truths which they internally perceive and acknowledge. They cannot speak so well as they can think them, nor can they form them in external thought so well as they can internally conceive them.

The same is true of their efforts to do good. An affection which is internally pure, and ardent for spiritual good, must first clothe itself with the rigid forms of natural good; and is resisted and choked, not only by all the evils and falsities of the external mind, but by all things in the world into which it seeks to come forth. Who that endeavors to do spiritual good is not sensible of this struggle, and almost complete failure, to bring out his good into ultimate life? "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." "The children are brought to the birth, but there is not strength to bring them forth;" or, if they are born, Pharaoh and Herod have commanded to slay them.

Now, the good and truth which are internally conceived, and which man endeavors to bring forth, do gain a real and eternal existence in the mind. They acquire, indeed, far more of distinctness and fulness of life than man can see ; for he sees only their effects in a lower degree of the mind.

It is indeed essential that good and truth be brought into life in this world, in order that they may acquire eternal life, or may become eternal life in the mind ; but this does not mean, that they must or can come forth into act and word with all their internal fulness of life. They are stored up in the mind as they are internally, and not as they are externally. And, when the good man comes into that world where to think is to speak, and to will is to do, he will find that, during his life in the body, he had spiritually and really said and done a thousand-fold more of truth and good than was externally known to himself and the world. When the Lord says to him, " I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me, " — he will be but very partially conscious that he has done such things. He will say, " *When* saw we Thee hungry, and fed Thee ; or thirsty, and gave Thee drink ? " He will be astonished to find, that his apparently trifling works of good among his brethren involved so much of internal duty to the Lord.

The present life must be employed principally in warfare against evils and falses. The opposite goods and truths are thereby received and implanted ; but

they are only a little manifested, and do not grow up to maturity in the present life. Few of the tender herbs become great trees, until they have been transplanted into a more congenial soil and climate. But whatever has taken root in this world will spring up and bear fruit, and be multiplied incredibly after death.

All these remarks may show equally how evil and falsity are stored up with the wicked, and come forth and are multiplied in the other life. And he that is wise will be careful not to account lightly the evil or the good, the falsity or the truth, that is manifested in this world, because they are comparatively small. He will not despise the day of small things ; for they are the seeds and plants which are destined to become great things.

It may easily be conceived, that, when men come into a world where all things are conformed to their internal principles, their state will be very different from what it is in this world. Then the good will have, in every successive state, all the good and truth they have a capacity to receive ; and all that they have they can fully express in words and actions. The contest between internal good and truth, and external evil and falsity, and between heaven within the mind and the world without it, will have ceased for ever. The interiors and the exteriors of the mind will be reduced to agreement and unity ; and all things in the surrounding world will exist, not to be shunned, but to be appropriated and enjoyed ; for all external things will correspond to those within the mind. Nothing will be presented



to check and stifle the goods and truths constantly imparted by the Lord ; but all things will conspire to promote their growth, and to fructify and multiply them.

Those who are capable of reflection can see, that the truths of the Word acquire in the minds of most men but a very stunted growth in the natural world. How little are they opened and expanded ! How little information do they really give men in respect to regeneration, and spiritual life in this world and the world to come !

At this day, most men prevent, if possible, the seed's springing up ; and those who permit this seem to unite, by common consent, to prevent its growing up, and putting forth branches. This is true of many of the leaders in the old church. Among the common people, there is occasionally a tendency in the herb to put forth branches. The religious truth in their minds leads them to inquiry concerning spiritual things. They wish to know, not only the matter of fact that there is a God, but who He is, and how He is to be thought of. They wish to know, not only that there is a heaven and a hell, but they wish to branch out, and learn what they are, both as to generals and particulars. In respect to natural things, they are permitted to become trees. Their science branches out into as many departments as they please ; and in each, the birds of the air build their nests ; their thoughts explore the whole, and form rational habitations.

Some of these persons wish to do the same in respect to spiritual things ; but their teachers give them

no instruction to enable them to do it. They go to their teachers, and ask for information concerning these things; but they are told that it is all a mystery, and that they ought humbly to rest satisfied without such knowledge till they die. Thus every branch which the heavenly plant would put forth is nipped in the bud.

But, if the field of the church were cultivated by better husbandmen, these heavenly plants might put forth branches, and become trees of considerable growth, even in this world. There is no good reason why religious knowledge should be limited to one slender stem or single blade. There is truth revealed sufficient to make spiritual science as extensive as natural, and as various in its branches. Bad as the world is, it is capable of becoming better; and our merciful Father has set no limits to the improvement of men in good or truth. He has not imparted a little, and said that men shall have no more; nor has He commissioned any teacher to discourage any efforts of His children to learn the truths of His kingdom.

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in, nor do ye suffer them that are entering, to go in.”

There is a wicked propensity in many children to kill all the birds. They derive it from the propensity in their parents and teachers to destroy all rational thoughts concerning spiritual things.

Not only the church in each individual, but also the church in the general sense, advances from the

least of all seeds till it becomes a great tree. How very small it was, both in respect to the number of persons whom it embraced, and the quality of their reception of its life, when the Lord was on earth! Even the twelve apostles knew no other than that the Lord's kingdom was to be a kingdom of this world. And what they thought it was to be, men have generally sought to make it, even till this day. Scarce any have been willing that the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ; but men have generally sought to secularize spiritual things, and reduce the Lord's kingdom to a kingdom of this world.

We see this more distinctly at the end of the church, when the evil principles which have long been working secretly are somewhat divested of their covering. What now is the Catholic religion, but a system of secular dominion? What is the Evangelical or Reformed Church, but a system providing for man's spiritual welfare, by his devoting to it a certain kind of thought or faith, while it leaves the whole life to self and the world? What is Liberal Christianity, but a system which abolishes all distinction between spiritual life and natural life, between love of the Lord and the neighbor, and love of self and the world?

We have an infallible index to the essential quality of all these systems: they all deny the Divinity of the Lord's Humanity, and the spiritual sense of the Word. And, when these are denied, the end of all that is called religion is the dominion of self-love and self-intelligence. The world in which these are the

gods is the only world of which there can be internal faith or love.

But, though men crucify the Lord, He is not dead, except in those who slay Him. He rises in glory, and takes to Him His great power, and reigns. Though men falsify His truths, they are living truths still. The seed which was sown in the world is still in the world ; and although every work of man shall perish, yet the Word of the Lord abideth for ever.

Though there are few who now receive it, and in them it is still the least of all seeds, yet it has commenced the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, in which it will grow and become a tree, and the birds of heaven will come and make their nests in its branches. In the New Church, spiritual truths are to be rationally understood. The kingdom of God is to come down, and worldly kingdoms are to be subjected. This means that all natural science and art and labor are to be brought into correspondence with, and made subservient to, spiritual truth and good. Evil loves which now reign, and direct all science, art, and labor to selfish and worldly ends, are to be removed ; and heavenly loves are to take their place, and direct all to the good of the Lord's kingdom.

Then spiritual life and natural life will be united ; and all the truths, and the arts, and all works proper to natural life, will become servants to the correspondent things of spiritual life. Every natural science will be subservient to the corresponding spiritual science. While the external faculties of the mind explore the natural, the internal will ex-

plore the spiritual. No limits will be set to knowledge in any department. One condition, and only one, will be established in respect to the attainment of each degree of truth; namely, that it be applied in doing the good which it teaches.

Then the internal sense of the Word will be seen in its own light, which is the light of heaven; and, this light descending into the exteriors of the mind, the natural truths of the Word, and all scientific truths, will be seen and acknowledged to be from the same Divine Fountain of light; and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

## SERMON XI.

## PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

Matt. xiii. 33—36. — ANOTHER PARABLE SPAKE HE TO THEM :  
 THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS IS LIKE UNTO LEAVEN, WHICH A  
 WOMAN TAKING HID IN THREE MEASURES OF MEAL, TILL THE  
 WHOLE WAS LEAVENED.

MANY persons can remember, that, when they first began to learn the Heavenly Doctrines, their false principles were in a state of more than common tranquillity. Perhaps sickness, or the death of some friend, had turned their attention to spiritual things; and they had found, on reflection, that the doctrines of the old church had no ability to lead them into spiritual truth. Perhaps they had been led by some other means to discover the inconsistencies in the old doctrines. Whether it can or cannot be remembered, something had occurred to weaken the power of their old, false principles, and liberate the mind from their dominion.

Although false principles were then more feeble and quiet than usual, the mind was much troubled from a sense of its depravity, and of its want of spiritual riches. But, when it had found the heavenly treasures of the Word, revealed in the writings of the

New Church, there was much gladness ; and a long state then commenced, in which the mind seemed to itself to be delivered out of the hands of tyrannical falsities, and endowed with the liberty of the sons of God. During this period, truths were greatly multiplied in the mind. The old falsities had but little power. They could do nothing but submit to all the rebukes and chastisements which truths saw fit to inflict. The prominent external habits, which had been the effects of false principles, were then reformed ; and it seemed to these persons, that they had wholly and for ever abandoned these falsities.

The truths which were thus stored up in the mind are the three measures of meal. These truths had not become good : the meal had not been converted into bread. A process of fermentation was necessary to purify the meal from many discordant ingredients.

Falsities are not loosened out of the ground of man's natural loves, and removed from the field, merely by receiving and implanting truths. They remain in the mind, — not only in the memory as things known, but inwardly conjoined with man's affections, so that a great part, and the most real part, of his life is still according to them. And when he comes into a state to endeavor to do internally the truths which he has acquired, he finds that falsities are mixed with the truths. The meal is not free from natural impurities, and is not ready to become bread.

In this state, truths are in the understanding, and man thinks that he is a full receiver of them. It is

then very hard to gain access to his internal life ; for you can approach him only with truths, and he is covered with truths, and will use them for his defence according to the state of his affections.

To bring such persons into a state in which truths will be their internal principles, something more is necessary than teaching them that they should apply truths to life. They admit this externally ; and something must occur to show them that they do not admit it internally and practically. Let certain false principles in an active state be infused among their truths, and we may see how the Lord brings good out of evil.

This will be best explained by examples ; but we must first remark, that leaven, or yeast, which produces fermentation, signifies falsities derived from evil.

If some one in this community were to teach openly that it is right for every man to cheat as much as he can whenever he makes a bargain, and if many should acknowledge themselves converts to his doctrine, and should practise upon it in numerous instances, it is probable that considerable fermentation would be produced. If all were of the same mind, no excitement would be produced ; but there are opposite principles among us, derived from the Word, and existing in the forms of civil law, and a common sense of justice. The supposed false principle would come into collision with these ; and the combat between them is what we should call fermentation.

Now, what would probably be the effect of having



our whole population thoroughly stirred up on this subject? Would not many a man be led to talk thus within himself? "I see that this doctrine is false and wicked. It must arise from selfish loves, and not from love of the neighbor. No man who loved his neighbor as himself, and wished to do as he would be done unto, would claim the right of cheating. But there is, indeed, a great deal of this doctrine prevalent among us; and I must even acknowledge that I find more of it in myself than I could have believed there was before I was thus led to reflect upon it. Many persons, and myself among the rest, who are called honest men, have been in the habit of saying that a thing is worth what it will fetch; and we have generally got all we could, especially of strangers whose complaints would not affect our reputation; and even with our neighbors we have sometimes tried to get rather the best end of a bargain. I do not see, therefore, but that we have all held the doctrine, that it is right to cheat. The difference between us and this new sect is, that we have held the doctrine more prudently than they do. But such a doctrine must not be tolerated. Every principle of justice forbids it. And, while we oppose it in others, we must take heed to put it away from our own conduct."

Is it not quite obvious that the teaching of such a doctrine would bring all the truths of justice, which men now have, into a more active state? Would not these truths contend against such a falsity, and produce a fermentation? And would not the effect be to dislodge the same falsity from many minds

where it had secretly remained? And would not the community be purified by this disagreeable fermentation?

Something of this kind always takes place when any kind of reformation is effected in human societies. It is so in the natural or civil degree, and it is so in the church or the spiritual degree.

When a member of a church is guilty of any wrong, and justifies it, and contends for his right to do it, this false principle, which is from his evil, and by which he defends his evil, is leaven among the meal, or falsity among the truths of the church. An effervescence is produced. Truths oppose the falsity; and accompanying the truth there is zeal, and with the falsity there is anger: hence there is heat on both sides.

If the members of the church reflect wisely, they will see that the leaven which is set at work among them is not limited to him by whom the offence came; and they will take heed to purge it away from themselves, while they oppose it in him. They will see that the same false principle has been operative in them, and they will regard this fermentation as permitted for the purpose of manifesting and removing the common evil and falsity.

In some cases, both in civil and in ecclesiastical society, the persons by whom such leaven is introduced are as much benefited by the fermentation as any others. Truths in themselves, aided by the truths of their brethren, overcome their falsities; and these fall down as sediment, and leave truths purified and strengthened as good wine. But there are other

cases, in which men cleave to their false principles, and must necessarily be removed from the society, together with their falsities.

There are many who have a wrong kind of aversion to such fermentations. They seem to take it for granted, that all wars and commotions are, on the whole, injurious in their moral effects. But this does not agree with what the Lord teaches. He came to cast fire into the earth, and to bring division. His truth does not rest quiet, and let evil and false principles reign. He taught that these fermentations were necessary for the purification of the minds of men from false principles.

And, when these occur, every one ought to be benefited by them; and every one ought therefore to have so much to do with them as is necessary for putting away the false principles from his own mind, and helping to put them away from the community. By saying that he will have nothing to do with such things, a man may check the proper operation of truths in his own mind, and fail of being purified from the very falsity which causes the contention that he so much bemoans. Still it is to be considered, that the duties of men are different in these cases. No exact rules can be prescribed; great freedom must be allowed. And, in the exercise of this freedom, their conduct will show whether they really cleave to the true or the false.

It is often the case that such fermentations separate persons who had been apparently very near to each other; but the fermentation does not produce the separating principle: it only develops it. If they had

been truly in agreement, they could not have disagreed respecting the leavening falsity. The result of the fermentation shows who ally themselves to the falsity; and it must not be thought strange, if some sympathize with it who were not suspected. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which is hypocrisy."

It is said in the text, that a woman took the leaven, and hid it in the meal. The term "woman" is obviously used in its bad sense, and signifies *evil*. We have seen that the falsities meant by leaven are falsities of evil.

When such falsity is introduced, the pretence is that it is truth, and that it is from love of the neighbor. This is meant by her "hiding" it in the meal: there is an effort to hide its true character, by mixing it with truths, and passing it off as one of them.

"All these things Jesus spake to the multitudes in parables, and without a parable He spake not unto them. That it might be fulfilled which was declared by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been hidden from the foundation of the world."

The reason why the Lord spake these things to the Jews in parables has been explained in former discourses. They could not be permitted to understand the truths contained in these parables, because they would profane them. He gave some explanations to His disciples, — all that they could bear, — as an assurance that these parables contained heavenly wisdom, which should be revealed to those who

became His true disciples. Thus it is said in the next verse:—

“Then, dismissing the multitudes, Jesus came into the house; and His disciples came to Him, saying, Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” Then follows the explanation, on which we remarked in a former discourse.

By the multitudes who were sent away are meant the things of the natural mind. In order to understand the parables, men must put away or at rest their external thoughts and affections, and come into an internal, spiritual state of mind; and this is meant by sending the multitudes away, and entering into a house. It appears as if the Lord sent the multitudes away and entered into a house that He might explain these things; but spiritually it means, that man needs to send the multitudes away and come into a house, that he may be in a state to understand them. There are few in whose minds there are not a multitude of such worldly things as must be dismissed before the spiritual truths of these parables can be well or safely received.

It is said that Jesus spake these things in parables, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been hidden from the foundation of the world.”

The only passage resembling this in the Old Testament is the second and third verses of the seventy-eighth Psalm: “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.” The

Psalm then proceeds to recount the leading and most striking events in the history of the Israelites. They are not secret or dark things, according to the common meaning of the terms ; for they are the most prominent historical facts recorded in the Old Testament.

Can any one imagine why the recital of these things is called a parable, except that they are mere representatives of spiritual truths ? And how was the Lord's teaching in parables a fulfilment of this declaration in the Psalm, except as His parables contain an internal history of the church on earth, and a description of the work of man's regeneration, which are also contained in that Psalm ?

Those who confine themselves to the literal sense will find it impossible to reconcile these two passages with each other, or to make the sense of either of them consistent with obvious facts.

Taking these parables in their literal sense, or in any sense that men allow them, how is it true that the things here spoken had been kept secret from the foundation of the world ? But we may see how this is true, when we consider the spiritual meaning of the parables. They give a description of man's regeneration, — of such regeneration as was rendered possible to be effected, and possible for man to understand, when the Lord had glorified His Humanity. Before that glorification, this regeneration would not have been effected, and a spiritual description of it could not have been understood. The most ancient church, which was a heavenly church, had no need of *such* regeneration. The people were

not so depraved as to need it. And, for the same reason, their understandings did not come down to the sphere in which this regeneration is performed; and therefore they could not understand it.

Succeeding ages which needed such regeneration could not understand it well, because it could not then be fully effected. The work of redemption and the glorification of the Lord's Humanity were necessary first to be performed. While performing these works, He could teach how man must be regenerated; and men then began to acquire a capacity to understand it. How slowly they have gained this knowledge may appear from the ignorance prevailing even to this day in respect to the meaning of these parables.

The internal sense of the Old Testament, indeed, teaches constantly concerning regeneration; but the truths respecting it were hidden, even from the foundation of the world. Men did not understand them. Though the truths of the Old Testament which described regeneration were literally common historical truths, which the Jews could say they knew, and their fathers had told them, yet they are declared to be "dark sayings of old;" — *dark sayings*, because their meaning was unknown; *of old*, because they were expressed in the ancient style in which spiritual things were described by natural.

We see, therefore, that the Lord did strictly fulfil the words of that Psalm, by teaching the spiritual truths contained in these parables; but, without reference to the spiritual meaning of both the Psalm and the parables, no such fulfilment can be discovered.

To every candid person it must be obvious, that the true spiritual meaning of most of the parables has not been understood in the Christian church. Their meaning has been almost as perfectly hidden as if the Lord had not uttered them. And when we say that their meaning has now been revealed, and that we teach it, let it not be supposed that any more than what is comparatively a very little of their meaning is yet revealed, nor that we understand more than a little of what is revealed, nor that we teach in these discourses any more than a little of what we understand; and it is quite possible that some, even of this very little, is not made intelligible to others. But, if we mistake not, enough of the meaning of several parables has been manifested to render them very instructive in the things which concern religious life; and this was never done out of the New Church. The things they contain have been hidden from the foundation of the world.

Men of the Christian church have not applied themselves to learning the meaning of the Word, with intent to do it. It is, indeed, essential to know what to believe; but why is this so important? For no other reason than that they may know how to live. But men of the Christian church have generally separated faith from charity, doctrine from life. They have thought that the main object was to learn what to believe. They have not kept in mind the final end, the end or use of right belief, viz. good life. They have no spiritual end in view in studying the Word, except obtaining correct faith.

When men read the Word in this manner, the



internals of the mind are closed. The internal sight is not opened into the light of heaven, except when we read the Word with the sincere intention of learning its truths *that we may do them*. It is then only that we are in a state to have the Lord expound to us His parables.

Those who read merely to learn what to believe, do not see the truths of the Word as now proceeding from the Lord. The question with them is rather, What was their meaning in old times? than, What is their meaning? As their minds are not turned to present duty, they are not turned to the Lord as now present and now manifested. They think of Him as distant, and as manifested to other men, and in times past. So also they think of Him, not as teaching now, and they inquire not what He now means, as speaking to them; but they think of Him as speaking long ago, and inquire what He meant in what He then said to others.

How obvious it is, that men have been and are in the habit of looking back to the first ages of Christianity, with the idea, that, if they can learn that sense of the Lord's words which applied directly to the state of those to whom they were first addressed, they shall obtain the true meaning applicable to themselves! And, for the same reason, they are very desirous of learning how those whom the Lord taught personally, and those who lived near that period, understood His words. They think that the meaning then received must be the true meaning.

But, if men went to the Word to know what is true that they might do it, they would see that the

Lord reveals its truths now as really as He ever revealed them, — as really as when the words were first spoken or written. They would think of the Word, not as having been spoken to others in time past, but as now spoken to them. They would soon learn, that the Word has degrees and varieties of truth adapted to all men in all ages and conditions ; and that they ought not to seek for that meaning of the Word which was adapted to, and received by, the Jews, but that which is adapted to themselves. They would find that the Word is the Divine Truth, in the broadest and fullest sense of the term ; that it is the light of the spiritual Sun, and that it contains all the degrees and varieties of that light. Then it would seem to them as foolish to inquire what rays of this light the Jews or other ancients received and walked by, as it would to inquire what rays of the natural sun they received and walked by. We may not well know what clouds exhaled from their evils and falsities, and intercepted and obscured the rays of the spiritual Sun ; and, if we did know them, it would not be our duty to place them before our eyes, to make our vision like theirs.

We have the same Sun that they had, and have all the means for seeing its light that they had. The light which they received is not assigned as our measure. We are to turn our faces to the Sun, and not to dim planets and comets of ancient or modern times.

The literal truths of the Word were as veils, coverings, or clouds, to moderate and almost conceal the light of the Word, lest men should profane it,

while they sought only to know what to believe, and not how to live. But to those who will become of the Lord's New Church by uniting faith and charity, He unveils His face, or the internal sense of the Word, and it shines as the Sun ; and His raiment, or the external truths, are white as the light.

## SERMON XII.

## THE TREASURE HID IN A FIELD.

Matt. xiii. 44. — AGAIN, THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS IS LIKE A TREASURE HIDDEN IN A FIELD, WHICH A MAN FINDING HIDETH, AND, FOR JOY THEREOF, GOETH AWAY, AND SELLETH ALL THAT HE HATH, AND BUYETH THAT FIELD.

IN the most general sense of this text, it teaches the uses of knowledge. Nothing becomes valuable to us, until we know that it exists, and where and how it may be obtained, and how it may be applied to useful purposes. Truth alone tells all this: hence the importance of truth. But truth may exist without our knowing it, and then it is useless: hence the importance of knowledge.

What are called the mechanical powers exist in the very constitution of nature among the most ignorant nations, as fully as among the most civilized. But, with them, the truths which teach the existence, applications, and uses of these powers, are unknown; they are a treasure hidden, or of which they are ignorant; and, without knowledge of these truths, the mechanical powers and their uses are as if they were not.

Among the aborigines of America, iron existed in great abundance ; but, being a grade lower in intellect than the truths to which iron corresponds, the truths which reveal its uses were concealed from them, and iron remained a treasure hidden in the field.

A little reflection will show, that the goods or uses of iron are in the truths which teach that it is, what are its properties or powers, and how to apply it to its proper purposes ; and that the goods or uses become ours, only by our acquiring these truths, and acting according to them. The first thing is to know the truths ; for, while they are hidden, all which they teach, all the good that is in them, is also hidden. To be without knowledge of the truth is therefore to have the whole treasure hidden.

The divine truth of the Word, with the divine good in it, is particularly meant by the treasure hid in a field. By the field is signified the church and its doctrine. This field was laid out by the Lord when He was in the world. He placed the Word in it. He sowed good seed in it ; but men have slept, and an enemy has sown tares. These having sprung up, and men having cultivated them and neglected the wheat, they have become so dense a covering as to conceal the heavenly treasure. It is now a treasure hid in a field.

Its existence has recently been revealed ; but only a few care for it. Many have become so enamored of treasures on earth, that the treasure of the kingdom of the heavens seems unworthy their attention. It, therefore, still remains to nearly all persons as

hidden ; for its value is appreciated by only a few of those to whom its existence is known.

We speak of the Word as unknown, and as having long remained unknown, because its truths have not been, and are not, understood. Most of them are not seen to have any useful meaning ; and the rest, because they are in some degree seen to teach a life which men do not love to live, are not considered worth buying.

The field or church containing the Word is valuable on account of this treasure ; and those who find not or prize not the treasure pass by this field, without remarking its value. They think of it only as of a common field, unless they know the treasure it contains ; and many who know something of its treasure esteem the field as vile and unprofitable, because it yields not the productions of selfish and worldly life.

When a natural man finds a treasure of natural wealth hid in a field, he hides or conceals it, lest it should be taken or destroyed by those who are opposed to his interests ; and he goes and sells all that he has, that he may become able to buy that field.

This describes how men should do, when they learn the truth of the Word ; but most persons who are informed of this treasure do far otherwise. The natural treasure is sure to be agreeable to the natural man, and he will therefore make the sacrifices requisite for obtaining it ; but this spiritual treasure is despised by most of those to whom it is made known, and they will not sell all they have to

obtain it. We say, therefore, that this parable describes not what most men do in respect to this treasure, but what they ought to do, and what they must do in order to come into possession of the field or kingdom of God, which contains this treasure, and of which this treasure is the value and life.

The text speaks of buying the field ; and the field means the kingdom of God, or the church in heaven and earth. The kingdom of God, or the kingdom of the heavens, is compared in the text to the treasure, and not the field ; because the value of the field depends wholly on the treasure. - The church and heaven are nothing, except from the goods and truths of the Word. These are the essential life of heaven and the church, and properly constitute heaven in angels, and the church in men. He who buys the field buys the treasure, and thus receives the kingdom of the heavens.

But what can be meant by buying this field ? What does man, in respect to obtaining the church or heaven, that corresponds to selling all he has, and giving away, and buying a field ?

In order that this may be understood, we must carefully observe that no class of men are properly the church ; but good and truth in men from the Lord constitute the church. A man truly becomes a member of the church, only by becoming a recipient of good and truth from the Lord, and a medium of them to others. He receives the kingdom of God in the same manner ; for the church is the kingdom of God on earth. He enters into heaven in the same manner. Good and truth constitute heaven, as they

constitute the church ; and to enter into heaven or the church is to have heaven or the church enter into man ; and to have heaven or the church enter into man is to have good and truth enter into him, and become the living and controlling principles of his life, — to have them to become his life, so that they are indeed the man.

This explanation takes off much of the strangeness of the idea of man's buying the field, which means the church ; and the rest of the singularity of this idea may be imputed to our ignorance, and want of habit, in what relates to obtaining the kingdom of God. We are not willing to believe that the church or heaven is to be bought ; we are not willing to make the requisite sacrifice for obtaining it. But, before we have finished this subject, we may make it plainer that man buys the field.

The field is the church — the kingdom of the heavens — containing the goods and truths of the Word, which is the treasure spoken of in the text. What does man give for this field ? What has he with which he can buy it ?

He has a selfish, evil heart. He has self-intelligence. He has the various evils and falsities which are the offspring of his depraved will and understanding.

Can he sell these for any thing that is truly valuable ? Yes : he can sell them for the goods and truths which constitute eternal life. Who will buy them ? He who has eternal life to give. Of what use can they be to Him ? Of no personal use : He does not appropriate them. But He is infinitely



unlike selfish men, who have respect only to their own interest. He buys only for the good of the seller, and He gives what is of inestimable value. He gives not sparingly, but gives all that the seller will receive.

If any man, therefore, have evil and false principles, let him sell them. They are not useful to keep, but only to put away. Indeed, the more he has of them, the poorer he is; but the more he parts with, the richer he becomes.

There is only one to whom he can sell them: the Lord alone can take them away. He may impart them to others, but they cannot dispossess him of them. The more he imparts to others, the more he still has. Others may receive his evils and falses, but cannot take them from him: the Lord can take them away, without receiving them.

Men cannot have the field, without buying it in this manner. The church, which is the field, is commonly thought of naturally as consisting of a society of persons; and then it appears as if the church received or obtained certain individuals as additions to its number. But, when we think spiritually, it appears that each individual receives and obtains the church, rather than the church the individual. Each one must receive into his own mind the goods and truths which are the life of the church; and this alone can constitute him a member of the church. He therefore receives the church more properly than the church receives him. And his obtaining it on the condition of selling, or renouncing and putting away, his evils and falsities, is called buying it.

In this wonderful manner is a spiritual meaning contained within the natural language of the Word.

However incredible the statement may appear to those who wisely estimate the goods and truths of the treasure hid in the field, and the worthlessness and essential damage of man's evils and falsities, yet it is not more astonishing than true, that many men at this day think they should make a bad bargain by selling all they have, and buying that field. They prize more highly the evils and falsities of selfish and worldly life, than the goods and truths of eternal life. They therefore turn away from this field, as worth less than its market price.

A few stand and gaze upon it, and think they shall buy it at some future period ; but, for the present, they desire to keep the evils which are the price thereof. They do not well consider, that evils which are kept are indulged, and that evils increase by indulgence ; and that the field which now seems a scanty and doubtful compensation for them will fall in apparent value by the delay. The evils and falsities will become apparently more valuable by their increase, and their increase impairs the capacity for regarding the field as valuable.

Many persons, on account of bad education and natural dulness, are slow to understand how they may put away sin, and receive eternal life. They are capable of making natural bargains ; but, when they are told the principles of spiritual traffic, they do not comprehend them. It is, therefore, necessary to be more particular in this matter.

We cannot all at once buy the field : we cannot

by any single act, nor by the acts of a single day nor any short period, sell all that we have. This means, that we cannot, by any sudden and short work, put away all our evils and falsities, and come into such a state of mind that the goods and truths of the church can flow in abundantly, and become our life. We cannot receive the church or kingdom of God any farther than we have removed our natural evils and falsities. We must first sell what we have, and then we can buy the field; and we can buy of the field only in proportion as we have sold our former possessions.

He who has sold nothing, or has not seriously commenced putting away evil as sin against God, is not aware how much he has to sell. It is not popular to manifest extreme wickedness before the world. Truth has some power to deter men from acting out their selfish and worldly loves: it places so great a restraint upon them, that they generally try to appear better than they are. Fear of punishment, of the loss of reputation, and of loss of property, operate so powerfully to deter men from open crimes, that few can know many of their own evils. They are little accustomed to look within; they are inclined to think as favorably as possible of themselves; and few acquire the ability to see much as evil in themselves, unless it comes forth into gross expressions. These and other reasons operate to make men ignorant how much they have to sell. They generally think they have but few evils.

Many persons will think this statement does not apply to them. They are in the habit of confess-

ing that they are very evil; that they are guilty of many and great sins; that their hearts are exceedingly sinful. They think they know how evil they are; and they will not believe that they have much, if any, more evil than they see and confess.

But these are the persons who say, "Lord, Lord," but do not the things which He says. They make profuse confessions of evil, because they wish to have credit for a disposition to remove it; but their secret disposition is to retain and indulge it. Although they speak thus of themselves, they expect others to think and speak of them as uncommonly good; or, at least, that others will think them a great deal better than they profess to be, and the better for professing to be so evil. They will be greatly offended if others speak of them as they do of themselves.

Whether their confessions of evil are sincere may be best determined by observing whether they endeavor to shun the evils which they confess. If one tells you that he is conscious that he ought to keep the Sabbath holy, and that his habit of attending to secular labor on that day closes his mind against spiritual truth, and abates its power over him, — if he confesses this, and then goes back to his old habit of profaning that holy day, he is not to be supposed honest in his confession. Similar remarks apply to other cases. Our confessions are good only when they are accompanied by a genuine effort to shun the evils we confess; and then they are not general, but relate only to such evils as we distinctly see, and are humbly endeavoring to remove.

It is still true, that very few men know how much

evil they have to put away ; and the amount of their evil possessions cannot be ascertained while they have them stored away to keep, but only when they loosen, explore, and remove them to sell them. And this must be done by little and little.

To-day we perceive some evil affection, with its falsities, seeking to turn us away from what we know to be duty. One evil rises up in one of us, and another in another ; and there is probably no one of us who may not, if he is watchful, discover, more than once a day, that some evil is excited within him.

Now, whatever the evil may be which at any time we discover, our duty is to look at it steadfastly, and examine and explore it, and sell it. Alienate it ; give it up absolutely and unconditionally ; give a perfect quit-claim of all interest in it. Do this because the Lord requires it, and because it is wicked and abominable for us to retain an evil, after we discover it, and know it to be evil.

It requires some resolution and some struggle to do this ; but the Lord really bears the whole burden of it, and we need not complain of weakness when we act in His strength.

Merely resolving to put away any evil will not, however, remove it : we must act as well as resolve ; we must afterward shun it. And the main resolution and struggle are required, not when we are thinking that we will put it away, but when we perceive it active in the mind, and we refuse to indulge it, and turn and act directly opposite to it, with a sincere determination to do it no more.

This is selling it; and the field, with its treasure, immediately begins to become ours. Something of the life of the church immediately flows into our minds, something of the kingdom of God is formed within us. If we observe carefully, we can perceive that, when we thus sell an evil, we feel that its power in us is abated, if not wholly gone. We feel relieved from its dominion. And we can also perceive that something new has come into the mind. We have a new regard for the Lord and the Word and the church. There is a general elevation of our views of spiritual good and truth. But, particularly, we see in new light, and feel with new warmth, the truth and good which are directly opposite to the evil we have removed. Who ever left off drunkenness, swearing, or any other sin, without seeing far more clearly than ever before the truths which teach that it is sin, and teach the good of temperance, honoring the name of the Lord, or whatever the opposite good might be? And who ever failed of feeling some delight and happiness in the new affections which flowed in, after removing the affection for any evil?

The truths which are then seen, and the good which is then enjoyed, are from the treasure in the field; and this shows that we come into possession of the field and its treasure, in some degree, when we put away any evil.

He who sincerely endeavors to put away any one evil, because he sees it to be sin against God, will not wilfully retain and indulge other evils. He may, for selfish and worldly reasons, leave off drunkenness, swearing, or any other external vice,—that is, he

may leave off indulging them externally, — and yet retain the habit of stealing or of committing adultery. But, if he breaks off any evil habit because it is sin, it will enable him to see his other evils more clearly, and make him feel that it is his duty to shun them also.

While man goes on indulging every evil to which he is inclined, or indulging some, and shunning others for reasons of selfish and worldly interest, he is a merely natural man; and such a man is spiritually asleep. His spiritual sight is closed. Spiritual truths do not give light in his mind to enable him to see whether what he does is good or evil: at least it may be said, that he sees but seldom, and then dimly.

And when he who is thus asleep is in the full indulgence of some evils, others must rest: they cannot all be equally operative at the same time. But it does not follow, because some are quiescent, that he has any more ability to see others as evils, nor any more inclination to shun them. And the same is true when he shuns any one for selfish and worldly reasons. This does not awaken him to see others, nor prompt him to shun others, any further than selfish policy dictates.

But to shun any one evil as sin against God — to shun it because the Lord's truth forbids it — breaks a man's spiritual sleep; it awakens him into some degree of spiritual light. It enables him to see other evils also, and to see them as sins against God. Especially it enables him to see those which are of the same class, or from the same root, with that

which he has shunned. And he feels under the same obligations to shun them all, as to shun the one which he has already resisted. There is in this respect an essential difference between the effect of shunning any evil because it is sin, and shunning it for the sake of any selfish and worldly interest. And, by due attention to this distinction, we may be often assisted in judging whether we shun any evil because it is sin.

He who begins to sell his evils in the manner here described will go on selling each one when he discovers it. He will soon learn, however, that he has a great many more than he had ever supposed; and that their magnitude, and their power in him, and his love for them, are far greater than he had imagined. But these discoveries are for the sake of inducing him more zealously and faithfully to sell them. They are not designed to oppress and discourage him. If they humble him, and make him more sensible that the Lord alone has power to remove them, it is all well; for the evils cannot be well removed in our name, but only in the name of the Lord.

Even when man is honest and faithful in endeavoring to sell all that he has, he will frequently find evils returning which he had endeavored to remove. They may indeed arise in the mind a thousand times, when they have been a thousand times denied and put away, as sins against God.

But they do not come each time in the same form, and accompanied by the same circumstances; and we have not each time the same principles operative in our minds to remove them. It is very important



to our spiritual welfare that our evils should be presented to us, and shunned, in all the varieties of form and quality in which they exist in the mind. And, as the good and true principles by which we oppose them are appropriated, and become living and eternal principles in us, it must be very useful to have all the forms and varieties of these implanted, which we acquire by shunning evils so many times and in so great varieties of form and quality. Every time we shun them, we receive more of the field and its treasure.

Man's general evils are but two, — the love of self, and the love of the world. From these, as parents, proceed an innumerable progeny. Many of them have so much resemblance to each other, that we, whose spiritual sight is dim, cannot distinguish them. A great host of them are seen merely as self-love, or as a less general evil, — for example, as hatred or adultery. The Lord distinguishes these evils in their most minute forms; and His truths relate to them, and are adapted to put them away in every variety.

We ought not to say, when an evil returns which we have honestly shunned, that it is the same evil. It is a particular variety or form of that evil; and, if we honestly shunned one form of it, it is not likely that we shall object to shunning another. It is not hard and unpleasant to shun what we do not love; and when we have ceased to love and tolerate every form of our evils, — when we have sold all that we have, — they will trouble us no more.

Though man can sell what he has, only slowly,

and thus buy the field slowly, yet he must never think there is any excuse for delaying to sell any evil that he knows within himself. The Lord will manifest to him each evil, and the various forms of each evil, when he is able to renounce them. To show them to him more rapidly, would destroy his free agency. And the fact, that we are permitted at any time to see in ourselves an evil, is proof that at that time the Lord gives us ability to sell it, and that we can then, by selling it, receive more of the field and its treasure.

As man cannot come into possession of the field except by slow degrees, as he sells his own possessions, it is very obvious that he should not wait for full possession of the field before he acknowledges it as the true object and end of all his hopes and labors. He should not decline and delay coming into possession of any part, because he cannot now have the whole. This means that he should not delay to acknowledge the church as the mother of all spiritual life. He should not wait for evidence within himself that he has received all the goods and truths which are the life of the church, before he can possess any of these goods and truths. He should confess them as fast as he receives them; and thus he will receive the church within himself more and more every day, and join the church more and more every day. He might as well say that he would put away none of his evils till he had evidence that he had put them all away, and would receive nothing of the kingdom of the heavens till he had evidence that he had received all things belonging to it, as to

say that he will not become a member of the church in any degree until he has evidence that he is fully prepared to live according to its doctrines. The cases are the same ; for externally joining the church, and performing the duties of a member of the church, is only an ultimate expression of man's efforts to sell all he has, and buy the field.

He who does not endeavor to sell or put away his own evils and falsities cannot be poor enough to receive the treasure hid in the field ; but, in proportion as he sells them, he may externally and internally receive the field and its treasure. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens."

## SERMON XIII.

## THE MERCHANT SEEKING PEARLS.

Matt. xiii. 45, 46. — AGAIN, THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS IS LIKE UNTO A MAN, A MERCHANT, SEEKING BEAUTIFUL PEARLS ; WHO, FINDING ONE PEARL EXCEEDINGLY PRECIOUS, WENT AND SOLD ALL THAT HE HAD, AND BOUGHT IT.

PEARLS correspond to knowledges of truths, and, in the abstract sense, to truths themselves. Merchants are those who collect truths from the Word, and use them for obtaining good, and also impart them to others that they may do the same. To him who imparts to others his knowledge of good and truth, the Lord gives more knowledge ; so that he receives a reward, although he does not give for the reward. Sometimes he is rewarded by receiving knowledges from those to whom he imparts. But even if they are poor in these things, and cannot recompense him, yet he is recompensed in the resurrection of the just. His affections of good or justice are increased by the exercise of imparting truths to those who are spiritually poor ; thus, his principles of justice are exalted, or have a resurrection. And this resurrection, or elevation of the just principles in his own mind, makes him receptive of more truths from the Lord ;

for truth flows in wherever there is good to receive it.

This shows how a spiritual merchant acquires his riches, and what use he makes of them.

Pearls correspond to truths of an external order, such as are in the literal sense of the Word. They are obtained from oysters, which are of the lowest order of animals. That they correspond to external or introductory truths, may appear from its being said that the gates of the Holy City were of pearls; for gates are for introduction and entrance into more interior things; and the gates of the city signify the external truths of the Word, by which men are introduced into the internal truths and goods of the church.

He in whose mind the kingdom of the heavens is forming is constantly in search of knowledges of good and truth. He desires to know good and truth, that he may do them; and, as he desires to do them, he also desires others to do them; and therefore he trades with all that he obtains, or imparts, and receives more. Thus he is a merchant.

He who reads the Word to obtain such knowledges of good and truth, and endeavors to use them to increase the spiritual riches of others, is sure to find the one pearl exceedingly precious. This pearl is the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as the true God and eternal life. He obtains this knowledge, or knowledge that the Lord is Good and Truth, and that all good and truth are from Him, not by any such sudden change of the mind as many have imagined; but he obtains it slowly and gradually.

There is a certain condition annexed to his receiving this knowledge ; and he can receive it only in proportion as he complies with that condition.

To buy this pearl, man must sell all that he has ; and he comes into possession of it only in proportion as he sells all that he has. This does not mean that he must reject, or throw away, all the other knowledges he has of truth and good, but that he must put away all his evils and falsities. Before he obtains this pearl, he is in the habit of regarding truths as his own intelligence, and of calling all the good his own which he has in his affections, and does to others. And he must put away this falsehood and injustice, by which he ascribes to himself what belongs to the Lord alone. All this is meant by selling all he has. These things he truly has ; they are in him as a part of himself ; they are constituents of his own life. But whatever of good and truth are in him, before he finds and buys the one pearl, is not truly his ; and it cannot be said that he truly has it. It is another's ; and it cannot become his, or a part of his life, till he ascribes it to the Lord, and ceases to call it his own.

Finding the one pearl consists in knowing the truth that all good and truth are of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are the Lord's own life present with man. Every one knows, or may know, that he is naturally prone to call his own all the good and truth that are in him, and that proceed from him. When he reads the Word and collects truths, and then looks at them in his own mind, he calls them his own wisdom. He also prides himself in such

possessions ; and, when he communicates them, he desires honor, or some other reward ; he desires others to think that the truths were his.

The case is the same in respect to the truths which he obtains by other means, and also with respect to all the good which he has and does. He sees not the Lord in it ; he sees it not as from the Lord ; he acknowledges it not as the Lord's.

To buy the one pearl, or acquire the knowledge that all good and truth are the Lord's, does not mean merely learning it as a matter of fact : it does not mean simply knowing that the Word teaches that it is so. It means knowing and acknowledging it practically and habitually. It means so knowing this truth as the mind knows the truth which it does. It means so knowing it, that the mind actually ascribes all the good and truth it receives to the Lord, and constantly looks to Him alone for good and truth.

This true knowledge of the Lord also implies seeing and acknowledging all good and truth in the Word. The Word is the Lord's truth : it is all the truth He reveals, or can reveal, to us. It contains truths of every order and variety, adapted to every state of man and angel. And every degree of good which man or angel has, or can have, is in the truths of the Word. The good is in the truth, as heat is in light ; and he who receives the truth into his understanding, and by it puts away his own evils, receives into his will the good of the truth.

The good and truth thus received from the Word are all that any one has. If you have now any thing

of good and truth in you, you acquired them in this manner. And the good and truth thus received are all of the Lord that is present with any one, or is imparted to any one. These, therefore, are to be acknowledged, not merely as from the Lord, but as being truly the Lord with us. They are His life, — His flesh and His blood given us, that we may eat and drink them, and have eternal life.

To find the Lord in this manner in His Word is to find the one pearl exceedingly precious. And how plain it is, that man cannot obtain this pearl without selling all he hath, and that he can do this but slowly and gradually! It is the work of his whole life, on earth and in heaven, to sell all he hath, and buy the one pearl. He can procure it no faster than he acquires knowledge of divine truth; and does the truth, not as his own, but as the Lord's.

In the first degrees of the work of regeneration, man does not distinctly see why it is very important to find this one pearl. He does not see what effect it has to ascribe all truth to the Lord, and do it as the Lord's. It seems to him sufficient to know and do the truth; and he sees good and truth as separate from the Lord. The one pearl is among those which he daily collects from the Word; but he does not distinguish it: he does not see that it is exceedingly precious.

Still he sees the pearl: he sees that the Lord Jesus Christ is declared to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that all good and truth are ascribed to Him, and that man is required to acknowledge Him in all. He also sees that he is commanded to sell



all he has, and that it is declared that he can become the Lord's disciple in no other way. And, so far as he complies with this direction, he finds that the one pearl brightens, and he begins to regard it as more precious. Then he goes on selling more, and the value of the pearl continually increases.

As he advances, he discovers what at first seems very strange, that there is somewhat of this one pearl in all the pearls: every truth seems to partake of this greatest truth, and indeed to be derived from it; and therefore the knowledge of each truth is seen to partake of the knowledge of this, and to be derived from it. He sees this at first but dimly; but afterward it becomes clear and certain, and he sees why it is so. He sees that the Lord is present in every truth. He had formerly supposed that only a few truths in the Word taught concerning the Lord; but now he sees, that, although a great part of the truths teach externally concerning men, they all internally teach concerning the Lord. When the mind is truly opened to see as the truth is designed to make him see, then man sees, not only whither each truth goes, but whence it comes. He sees upward as well as downward. Each truth is then seen as requiring the acknowledgment of the Lord, as man's first and inmost duty.

When man arrives at this state, he would as soon think at noon-day of ascribing the rays of light to some other source than the sun, as of ascribing any truth to any other than the Lord. And as he would not say, "There is light because the sun once did shine," but "because it now shines;" so he would

not say, "These things are true because the Lord *spake* them," but "because the Lord *speaks* them."

When man has become accustomed to see every truth as now from the Lord, and to see the Lord, and acknowledge, worship, and serve Him in every truth that he learns, he is prepared for another great change; and this is the last general change which his mind undergoes in the process of regeneration.

He ceases to regard truth principally in reading the Word, and in seeing the Lord in the Word. He has respect to good more than to truth. He does not lose any of his regard for truth; and the light in his mind is not diminished, but greatly increased. Still, his regard for good becomes greater than his regard for truth. With him the heat of the Word predominates.

In the former state he saw the Lord in every truth of the Word; now he not only sees, but feels Him. The Lord has now become, not only his light, but his life; and his love of the Lord preponderates over his faith in the Lord. Both his love and his faith are from the Lord, and so he acknowledges them.

Before this change, the Word seemed to be the light of life; now it is seen as itself living, and giving life; and as he sees it, so it is to him. To him the Word is made flesh; and it dwells or abides in him as his life, even life eternal.

These statements have been made, that the manner in which the one pearl is found, and how it becomes exceedingly precious, may be distinctly seen. And, if this is understood, the mind will reject the common error concerning sudden regeneration.

They who suppose that in a day or minute they sell all they have, know nothing of this difficult work.

When, from sickness, alarm, or any strong power of persuasion, the operation of evil affections is suspended, hopes of heaven and fears of hell may be excited in many persons to almost any degree; and the mind may be so directed and controlled as to seize on any thing that is called a protecting arm. While the delusion lasts, there may be external tranquillity; and, if the understanding be kept bound by false faith, the mind may never be able to see that all this is but the mimicry of religion.

But, if the mind be turned by the Divine mercy to the duty of keeping the commandments, it soon appears that the whole duty of renouncing self, and buying the one pearl, is still to be performed.

A more distinct idea of the meaning of the text may be obtained from the following beautiful extract from Swedenborg concerning the gates of the Holy City, New Jerusalem. We will first remark, that, when these gates are mentioned, every one ought to think of the means of entrance into the true church.

“ ‘And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every one of the gates was of one pearl.’ This signifies, that the acknowledgment and knowledge of the Lord conjoins into one all the knowledges of truth and good which are derived from the Word, and introduced into the church. By the twelve gates are signified the knowledges in chief of truth and good by which man is introduced into the church: by twelve pearls is also signified the knowledges in chief

of truth and good : hence it was that the gates were pearls. The reason why each of the gates was of one pearl is because all the knowledges of truth and good, which are signified by gates and by pearls, have relation to one knowledge, which is their continent : which one knowledge is the knowledge of the Lord. It is called one knowledge, although there are several which constitute that one knowledge ; for the knowledge of the Lord is the universal of all things of doctrine, and thence of all things of the church ; from it all worship derives its life and soul ; for the Lord is all in all in heaven and the church, and thence all in all in worship. The reason why the acknowledgment and knowledge of the Lord conjoins into one all the knowledges of truth and good from the Word, is because there is a connection of all spiritual truths ; and, if you are disposed to believe it, their connection is like the connection of all the members, viscera, and organs of the body. Wherefore, as the soul contains all these in their order and connection, so that they are felt no otherwise than as one, so, in like manner, the Lord contains or holds together all spiritual truths in man. That the Lord is the very gate by which men are to enter into the church, and thence into heaven, He Himself teaches in John : ‘ I am the *door* : by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.’ And that the acknowledgment and knowledge of Him is the pearl of great price, is meant by these words of the Lord in Matthew : ‘ The kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man, a merchant, seeking beautiful pearls ; who, when he found one pearl of great price, went

and sold all that he had, and bought it.' The one pearl of great price is the acknowledgment and knowledge of the Lord." A. R. 916.

It is important to observe, that what is described in this parable concerning the finding of the one pearl follows the discovery and acknowledgment that the Word has an internal sense. This parable immediately follows that concerning the treasure hid in a field, and by that treasure was meant the internal sense of the Word.

When man has discovered that treasure, and is endeavoring to sell all that he has to buy it, he becomes a merchant-man seeking beautiful pearls. The truths of the Word begin to shine from their internal light, and to appear of great value. Not all of them appear luminous; but among the literal truths he finds many of which he can in some degree see the internal sense, and they are as beautiful pearls.

Before man has any belief that the Word has an internal sense, its truths present no such appearance. Occasionally, indeed, a ray of heavenly light may be received from them; for every man who has not become inordinately depraved has some remains of reverence for the Word as holy and divine. But, ordinarily, those who admit not that the Word has an internal sense are in such darkness that they see no more internal degrees of truth in the Word than in other books. Most of its truths appear totally dark; and those in which any light is seen are regarded as but half-decayed fragments of the glory of the Lord which appeared in former days. These they endeavor to polish with their own wisdom; and

then they call them their own, and use them as their own.

In such a state, man cannot discover the one pearl exceedingly precious. He must first acknowledge the Word to be Divine, and endeavor to put away or sell all in himself that prevents his finding its treasures. Then he will begin to see its truths as pearls, and will discover the one pearl exceedingly precious; and it will seem to be within every other pearl, and to be the essence of all the pearls. He will then see more than ever the need of selling all he has. He will see new degrees of evil and falsity in himself; and the work of selling all will assume a new aspect: it will appear to be a much greater work.

Men are commanded, in the very first state of regeneration, to forsake all; and some think they have done it when they have only corrected a few external evil habits, and turned their minds to new modes of obtaining their selfish ends. And, in all cases, man seems to himself to have performed the duty of forsaking all more fully in the first stages of regeneration than in later states. In each successive state the command is repeated, as the condition of receiving the goods and truths of that state. And this Word of the Lord abideth for ever; for even the celestial angels advance in good and truth, only by putting off more and more fully, and removing farther and farther, all that is of self.

There are many kinds and degrees of self-denial and self-punishment; but most of them have selfish and worldly ends in view. The miser may starve

himself and his family, because the love of money controls all other loves. The Pharisee may fast twice in a week, pay tithes of all he possesses, and make long prayers, for no other end than to appear righteous unto men. Examples of this kind might be multiplied indefinitely.

Now, it is very certain, that, when men restrain some evil loves for the sake of gratifying others which are stronger, there is no true self-denial. We truly sell what we have, only when we renounce and remove our evils and falsities because they are opposed to the Word of the Lord.

We ought to see and acknowledge as an important truth of doctrine, that selling all we have and buying the treasure hid in the field, and the pearl of great price, go together. Those who truly deny self do it in obedience to the Word; and such obedience exalts the Word in the mind, and opens the internal eyes to see in the light of heaven the hidden treasure of the Word. And it has the same effect in respect to revealing and giving the one pearl, — the knowledge and acknowledgment of the Lord; for just in proportion as self is abased, the Lord is exalted.

Whatever appearances of self-renunciation men may assume, they must be false in all cases when they are not accompanied by finding and buying the treasure hid in the field, and the one pearl exceedingly precious. The knowledge and acknowledgment of the holiness of the Word, and the divinity of the Lord's Humanity, as certainly and necessarily accompany genuine self-denial, or shunning evil as sin, as the increase of light and heat accom-

pany the removal of clouds from before the face of the sun.

In this we may see how essentially united are the three great doctrines of the New Jerusalem: that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One only God; that His Word is Divine; that, in order to be saved, man must shun evil as sin, and do good according to the Word. He who has true faith in either of these doctrines has faith in them all, and he who denies one denies them all.



## SERMON XIV.

---

### THE NET CAST INTO THE SEA.

Matt. xiii. 47—50. — AGAIN, THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS IS LIKE UNTO A NET CAST INTO THE SEA, AND BRINGING TOGETHER OF EVERY KIND ; WHICH, WHEN IT WAS FULL, THEY DREW TO THE SHORE, AND, SITTING DOWN, GATHERED THE GOOD INTO VESSELS, AND CAST THE BAD AWAY. SO SHALL IT BE IN THE CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE : THE ANGELS SHALL COME FORTH, AND SHALL SEVER THE EVIL FROM THE MIDST OF THE JUST, AND SHALL CAST THEM INTO THE FURNACE OF FIRE : THERE SHALL BE WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.

THIS text relates to the two classes of natural men. Those who are but little acquainted with the truths of the New Church may suppose, that all natural men are evil ; but they will find, by a further examination of the writings of Swedenborg, that he divides natural men into two classes, — the good and the evil.

There are three heavens, — the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural. Corresponding to these there are three classes of men in the church. These three classes in heaven and the church receive three different kinds or degrees of good and truth.

A great many among the heathen are natural good men. Their minds are very little enlightened by

spiritual truths. Most of them know that there is a God, that there is a heaven, and a hell; and they have such common truths as the Ten Commandments, to teach them the distinction between good and evil. They endeavor in some degree to observe these truths in their conduct with men; but they think but little of the internal distinction and opposition between good and evil, and little of any thing except what belongs to this world. Yet, because they endeavor to shun such sins as they know are forbidden, and to lead friendly and useful lives with their neighbors, they are good men. Although they are of a low order, yet they love good rather than evil; and hence they desire more light than they have, and can receive it, and walk in it, after death.

Christians ought to be spiritual and celestial men. They have the Word; and if they lived according to the truth that is revealed to them, even as well as many of the heathen live according to what is revealed to them, it would be obvious that their minds were opened into the light and heat of heaven, and that they were spiritual and celestial. But, at the present day, there are but very few good men who rise above the natural degree; and some of these are not so good as the natural good men among the heathen.

In speaking of men among Christians who are in natural good, we do not include those who are strongly confirmed in false doctrines, even if they are externally moral. Their false doctrines originate in natural evil, and are inconsistent with any genuine kind of good. We refer to a humble class of men

and women, who enter but little into the false systems of this day, but read the Word, and try to shun the evils which they see forbidden, and to treat their neighbors with kindness and justice, and to perform the common works of piety according to the order of the community in which they live. They inquire not into the deep things of faith. They do not explore their own minds very deeply nor critically ; but they content themselves with an external degree of knowledge, and hence they learn and do but an external degree of good.

Men generally know nothing of the three discrete degrees of good and truth. They see, indeed, that an act may have more or less good in it ; but they do not see that there are different orders or kingdoms of good, distinguished as the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral kingdoms in nature. And when they think of truths, they think very unwisely. They say that what is true is true, and cannot be more true. And, when they are told of different orders or degrees of truth, they are completely confounded. Yet they do sometimes distinguish between three orders of natural truth ; viz. moral or rational truths, which teach what is morally right or wrong ; political truths, which relate to the duties of men as they are affected by civil and social institutions ; and merely scientific truths, which relate to the qualities and operations of material things.

These three kinds of truth relate to merely temporal and worldly life, with evil men ; but, with good men, they are made subservient to divine truth, and are applied to religious life. In general, we

find that men know something of these three kinds of worldly truth, and also of the natural degree of divine truth ; and also that there are different degrees of clearness, certainty, and reality, in these four orders of truth. They do think that one order of the truths are more true than the others.

Which of these orders of truths are generally considered the highest ? Which seem to men to shine with the clearest light ? Certainly the minds of men are inverted ; for they generally agree in regarding the lowest order of truths as the most real and unquestionable. That two and two make four, that trees grow, that waters run downward, and other truths obtained through the bodily senses, seem to nearly every man to be more certainly known, and to be more real, than that there is a God, that there is a heaven, and a hell. They are seen in what seems to men a far more perfect degree of light, than that in which they see any civil, moral, or religious duty. They would sooner doubt that murder, adultery, and lying are evil for them, than that gold is good for them.

Some of these things have been said to prepare for the remark, that it is not easy to explain to natural men the distinction between the three degrees of good, or the three kinds of men, — celestial, spiritual, and natural. We desire to show who are meant by natural good men ; and then every one can see who are natural evil men. With many we can, perhaps, do no better than to say that natural good men are such as the good men they are acquainted with ; for there are few of any other class of good men

now on this earth ; and few have the capacity to distinguish between these and the higher orders, when they see them.

There are, however, some who can see this subject in rational and also spiritual light ; and it may be useful to them to say, that the human mind is constituted with three distinct stories or degrees. With most men at this day, only the lower story or degree is opened. Into that they receive the goods and truths of the literal sense of the Word,—some more, others less. These are natural good men, if they endeavor to live according to that external degree of truth ; they are natural evil men, if they follow their own intelligence, impelled by their own lusts, instead of the truth.

The second degree of the mind is opened with spiritual men, and the third with celestial men ; and they receive the goods and truths of the Word in those degrees. Celestial men receive the three degrees of the good and truth of the Word, spiritual men two degrees, and natural men receive only the lowest degree. In the natural degree there are both good and evil, and innumerable varieties of each.

The judgment executed at the consummation of the age, or end of the church, on natural men, both good and evil, is meant by this parable of the net cast into the sea. The judgment is performed in the world of spirits, where, for some time after death, the evil and the good dwell together as in this world. We refer to the two classes of natural men. Those who have become spiritual or celestial seldom remain long in the world of spirits ; they are generally

nearly prepared for heaven when they die. So, also, the worst among the evil, or rather those whose external life is the worst, are ready for judgment when they die.

But there are great numbers of natural good men, who have so many evils and falsities attached to them, and so much worldliness and grossness of character, that they cannot be admitted into heaven till they have been vastated, or have had their wrong qualities separated from their best principles. Many also who are internally evil have something of good and truth in externals. Such is the case with a great part of the evil men, especially in civilized communities. The power of the civil law and of the customs of society, renders it good policy for evil men to live externally like good men; and to so great a degree is this the case, that there are only a very small part of most communities, of whom we can decide with any degree of certainty, whether they are good or evil.

With some evil men the cloak of good and truth which they wear is assumed from deliberate hypocrisy; but with others it is induced by the mode of their education from infancy. It is common for children to be taught to accomplish their selfish ends by words and actions, which, in their external form, are right and orderly; and they practise in this manner when they become adults, with but little deliberate and intentional hypocrisy.

Both the good and the evil whose external and internal qualities do not agree, remain in the world of spirits until their externals are put off, and their

internals are brought out distinctly into external life. Before the last judgment, many remained there for several ages ; but, since that period, none remain more than thirty years.

These natural persons, collected in great numbers in the world of spirits, appear to the angels who look down upon them as seas or oceans. We are informed by Swedenborg, that the process of judging those who were there at the time of the last judgment appeared like collecting them with nets, and separating the good from the evil, and placing the good among their proper heavenly societies, and casting the evil into hell. And this is meant in the parable by casting a net into the sea, and gathering of every kind, and receiving the good into vessels, and casting the bad away. Seas have this meaning generally in the Word ; and for the same reason they signify the memory of man, in which all things that are received through the bodily senses, both bad and good, are stored up. And it is not difficult to see, that the kind of judgment here described is performed in the external mind of every man. The truths of his internal mind are the angels which descend. They take up and explore all things of the external mind, and separate between the evil and the good. It is by truth thus admitted into the mind, that men after death are made to reject what is not in accordance with their ruling loves. The good put off their evils and falsities, and the evil their goods and truths.

What has been said shows what is meant by the sea in this text from the Revelation : “ The former

heaven and the former earth were passed away, and the sea was no more." By the former heavens are meant the artificial heavens, or religious establishments of those who had an external regard for religion, but were internally evil; and by the earth is meant the same class of people with respect to their external or civil establishments. By the sea is meant the natural class of men, of the lower order, already described. They also were there collected, and were judged as has been stated; and then the sea was no more.

It is to be observed, that the seas which appear in the spiritual world are not material, nor are they permanent. They appear and disappear as the people are changed. The waters of the sea correspond to natural truth, — the lowest kind of natural truth or scientific truth. Those who are in this truth, and have no higher degree of life, correspond to fishes. And where such persons are collected in the world of spirits, there appear seas, because these correspond to the kind of truth in which they live.

It is from this lowest or scientific state that all men are to be redeemed. The knowledge which they acquire in childhood is of this character, and their life at first is of this ultimate degree. For this reason the Lord chose His apostles from among fishermen, who correspond to those who receive and instruct in rational and spiritual truth. They were to instruct in all degrees of truth, above the scientific; and hence they were to reform men of all classes. Spiritual truths are signified by men; and hence it was said to them, "Ye shall catch men."



To understand what is meant by casting a net into the sea, and catching fish, will require considerable attention.

In the cases mentioned in the Word, this process of fishing means, literally, fishing with a net from a ship. The sea means the general sphere or world of those who are in mere natural science. The fishes mean the persons, and also those things of the human mind, which are in this sea. A ship signifies doctrine. The process of fishing with a net corresponds to instructing and reforming those who are in such an external life ; but how it corresponds is not to be seen without some consideration.

When we catch fishes, we take them up out of their natural element or world into the air. They cannot live there. We do not take them up to have them live and grow as fishes ; but we take them that they may become food, or give nourishment, to beings of a higher order. Some of them, however, are bad, and are thrown away.

Now, place before the mind a natural man, and also a suitable person to instruct him in spiritual things, and you will see a process like fishing. The teacher casts forth his net, or certain truths so united and arranged as to enter into this man's mind, and collect and draw up some of his scientific principles into a spiritual sphere : he brings them up out of the sea into the air.

This means the same as to elevate a man's thoughts and affections from natural things to spiritual. There is an internal degree to every one's mind, corresponding to the external degree as the air to the water.

When we instruct men in spiritual things, we do not pour truths into their minds: we cast forth something to raise up their natural principles into a spiritual sphere.

While thus teaching, the minister stands in his doctrine: he fishes from a ship. He does not teach scattered and incoherent truths; but, being in a certain doctrine, truths are put forth as a well-constructed net. His doctrine is spiritual; but it rests on natural truth, as the ship on the sea.

When the fish has been raised into the air, it dies. Its own life, which constituted it a fish, ceases. The natural life of man's scientific principles is selfish and worldly. That must die, or be put off, when his natural principles are raised up, and become nourishment for spiritual life. Hence, when the teacher seeks to raise a man's thoughts and affections to spiritual things, he tells him that he must deny himself, or put away his natural life.

And, when these scientifics are raised up to form bodies receptive of spiritual life, a careful work of sorting them is performed; for many of them are false and evil, and must be rejected. But the orderly scientifics are received, divested of their evil life, and become nourishment, and a body for the internal life.

From this statement it will appear that fishing does not correspond to instructing men in scientific truth, but to such instruction as elevates them into spiritual life, and is accompanied with putting off the old man, and putting on the new man.

A process like this is necessary in judging men in

this world and the next. They must be raised up out of their natural state to see their true quality; and then the good choose life, and the evil choose death.

It is said that the angels shall sever the evil from the just, and cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is to be understood like what is said of the net cast into the sea. It is not literally true, according as things are and appear in this world; but they appear so in the spiritual world. The judgment of natural men, at the consummation of the age, actually appeared like casting a net into the sea, and gathering the good and the bad, and sorting them. So, also, the hells into which many of the evil are cast, actually appear like furnaces, chimneys, and lakes of fire. The term used in our text is said to mean *chimney*, rather than *furnace*.

But it is not to be supposed, that there are material chimneys or lakes, nor such fire as burns material things. There are spiritual things corresponding to these, just as spiritual light corresponds to natural light. Spiritual heat with the good is their good loves, and with the evil it is their evil loves. The fire of the evil is such as constitutes their burning lusts and raging passions.

The like is to be said of the *gnashing of teeth*. The contentions of the evil are often so heard in the other life. They have not material teeth; all things with them are spiritual; but they agree in appearance. Men and animals in this world sometimes gnash their teeth from anger, or a strong disposition

to injure others. The same passions are exercised in the spiritual world, and they appear in the same manner to those who see or hear them.

If these remarks are understood, they will furnish a key to the meaning of a very extensive class of texts in the Word. Nothing is more common in the prophets than statements of facts which never occurred, and never can occur on this earth. Thus in the Revelation a great dragon is described, which elevated his tail to heaven, and thrust down the stars; the heavens, earth, and sea are said to have passed away; and many other things equally strange are recorded. In general, the descriptions of things in heaven, hell, and the world of spirits, are made by describing corresponding things, real or imaginary, on this earth. Thus, in describing hell, it is spoken of as a sea, a lake of fire and brimstone, a bottomless pit, a furnace of fire, outer darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth. These and other representations of it are made according to the particular infernal principles which are treated of.

The common question is, whether these things are to be understood literally. The answer is, Yes: they are exact descriptions of things as they exist and appear in the spiritual world. They are not to be understood as relating to this world, nor are such things material; but such things exist and appear in the spiritual world, precisely as they are described in these strange and obscure passages of the Word.

If any of the natural, scientific truths of your minds have now been elevated into a spiritual sphere, take heed that they do not return into the sea. Keep

them in this elevated state, till they lose their natural, selfish, and worldly life. They are loath to part with this life; they will struggle to return. They are slippery, and hard to retain in the air. But keep them there till *their* life has gone. Then divine truths in the internal mind will sort them, and receive the good into vessels, and they will themselves become vessels receptive of spiritual life; and the bad they will cast away.

## S E R M O N XV.

---

 THE SCRIBE INSTRUCTED INTO THE KINGDOM OF  
HEAVEN.

Matt. xiii. 51, 52. — JESUS SAITH TO THEM, HAVE YE UNDERSTOOD ALL THESE THINGS? THEY SAY UNTO HIM, YEA, LORD. THEREFORE, THEN HE SAITH UNTO THEM, EVERY SCRIBE INSTRUCTED INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS IS LIKE UNTO A MAN, A HOUSEHOLDER, WHO BRINGETH FORTH OUT OF HIS TREASURR THINGS NEW AND OLD.

It will be observed, that, in the translation of the text here adopted, we read “instructed *into* the kingdom of the *heavens*,” instead of “instructed *unto* the kingdom of *heaven*.” In this and most other cases where *the kingdom of heaven* is mentioned in the common translation, it is *the kingdom of the heavens* in the original language. The translators did not know that there were three heavens, and that each of these is divided into many lesser heavens. If they had done their duty, and translated the expression literally, it would have made it easy for us to learn what is now revealed; we should have seen that it accorded with what we had known from infancy, viz. that there were more heavens than one, — that in our Father’s house are many mansions.

To say "instructed *into* the kingdom of the heavens" is an unusual mode of expression; but it gives the sense of the passage more fully than any other which occurs to us.

In the common translation, the parallel begins thus: "Therefore, every scribe instructed," &c.; but the word *therefore* seems to belong to the preceding verb, "Therefore he said unto them;" and not, "Therefore is the kingdom of the heavens like a man, a householder."

The term *treasure* means also a treasury or treasure-house.

"Jesus saith to them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto Him, Yea, Lord."

This question is addressed to those who are the Lord's disciples, — to those who learn of Him, and follow Him. All such are regenerated by Him; He takes away their natural evils and falsities, and gives them good loves and truths as the active principles of their lives.

The question is, whether they have understood all the seven preceding parables, — Of the Sower, of the Tares of the Field, of the Grain of Mustard-seed, of the Leaven, of the Treasure hid in the Field, of the Merchant - man seeking beautiful Pearls, and of the Net cast into the Sea.

To understand these things means much more than merely seeing the truths taught in these parables; but even seeing them distinctly, and knowing them as truths, is much more than any have done in the whole period of the Christian church. Men have supposed these parables contained truths; but they

have not seen and known what truths they contained.

In the spiritual sense, understanding these things means not only perceiving their meaning internally, and rationally knowing them as truths, but also assenting to them, and adopting them as principles of life. And, in order that they may become living principles of the mind, they must perform the works in the mind which are described in them. What is described in these parables must be done in man's mind, before the truths can acquire their proper life and power in him; and it is only so far as the truths do this, that he can be said, in the heavenly sense, to understand them. A good understanding have all they that do these things, or in whom the divine truths do their proper work.

The kingdom of the heavens, which is so often mentioned in these parables, means the reign or government of the heavens; that is, the reign or rule of heavenly principles in the mind of one who is becoming regenerate. In man's natural state, selfish and worldly things reign: in order that he may become a child of God, heavenly truths and goods must be implanted or begotten, and must grow, and acquire strength, and become his ruling principles. What they do in the mind is their reign, government, dominion, or kingdom; and these operations of divine truths in the mind to acquire dominion in it, and to reign over all evil and earthly things, are what are described in these parables; and these are the reign or kingdom of the heavens.

And, when divine truths have been sown in the



mind, and have sprung up, and acquired power, and reigned so as to perform the things described in these parables, they have made him truly wise, — he truly understands them, — they have instructed him into the full reign or kingdom of the heavens.

When the twelve apostles professed to understand what the Lord taught in these parables, they represented those in whom the reign or kingdom of the heavens has come, or in whom such works of regeneration have been done as are described in those parables. Therefore the Lord said unto them, “Every scribe instructed into the kingdom of the heavens is like a man, a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”

The scribes among the Jews were their learned men. The art of printing was unknown, and these scribes or writers were the persons who copied the Scripture. Hence they became, in an external sense, learned in the Scripture; and they were much employed to teach others. By literally writing the truths of the Word, these truths were stored in their external memory; and this memory became a treasury, out of which they could bring them forth while teaching others.

It is easy to see, that these scribes represented those who write the divine truths in their hearts by doing them. We do not mean that they were really like such persons as do the divine truths; but their external manner of writing, and its effects, serve as types or external representatives of writing the divine truths in the internals of the mind, as internal princi-

ples of life, and then bringing them forth in words of wisdom and works of love.

It is said of those who will become of the Lord's New Church, that He will put His law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. This is effected by their doing and teaching the divine truths, and not by any sudden and arbitrary operation of the Holy Spirit. They are not only instructed by divine truths how they should live, and are thus made to know the kingdom of the heavens, but they understand them rationally, and do them freely; and, what is far more, by doing the truths they receive the good of the truths, and thus receive them into the inmost degrees of their wills and understandings. Then their ruling loves are the loves of good and truth which they received in doing the truth; and these loves, with the wisdom proceeding from them, are heaven; and their reign, operation, or life, is the kingdom of the heavens.

Then the kingdom of God is truly within them. They were first instructed concerning the kingdom of the heavens, and next instructed in it, and finally instructed into it; or so instructed and led by the divine truths, that the life of the heavens became their life. This is meant by their having the law put into their inward parts, and written in their hearts; and the same is meant by their being scribes instructed into the kingdom of the heavens.

We are all scribes or writers. Every day we are writing something in the book of our lives. If we learn and do heavenly truths, we write them within our minds, and they become the written, established,

permanent principles of our lives. If we store our minds with merely worldly knowledge, and regard its truths as our own intelligence, and write them by doing them with selfish and worldly loves, — then these become, not only the record of our past lives, but the laws of our future lives.

Only a few at this day are instructed, or are willing to be instructed, into the kingdom of God. More are willing to be instructed concerning that kingdom. There is some love of knowledge, but little love of doing the truth. Many will learn it who will not write it, or who write it only like Jewish scribes, in the external memory. But they write something more internally.

Consider the case of those who learn heavenly truths so that they understand what those truths teach them to do, and yet they turn away from the duty. Surely they do not write those truths within them as rules of life, but they write their refusal to obey them. They re-write the maxims of their self-intelligence, — the rules of their selfish and worldly policy. They may think, that, while they resolve to delay obedience to the truth, they still resolve to obey it at some future period. But they deceive themselves. Their resolution to delay is real, and they write it; but their resolution to obey at a more suitable time is unreal, and they write it not. They will do according to what they have written: they will delay doing their duty. They will remain somewhat instructed concerning the kingdom of the heavens, but not instructed into it. They must write their resolution by doing their duty, before the Lord, the

angels, and the church, who acknowledge only realities, can open the gates of the heavens.

And why should we delay any known duty? When the hour of death arrives, each one may say, "What I have written I have written." When we enter on the future life, every one will be judged out of the things written in his book; every one according to his works. Not according to things which he had proposed to write; not according to works which he had said that he resolved to do; but he will be judged from the things verily written, — by works verily done.

And we have no lease of the future: the present only is secured to us, as the day of preparation for heaven or hell. And as we improve the present, we do prepare for heaven or hell: we write our own sentence, and none shall reverse it. "The fool resolves and re-resolves, then dies the same. Be wise to-day: 'tis madness to defer. Procrastination is the thief of time." — "Watch, therefore; for ye know not at what hour your Lord cometh." — "Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Write not, I will delay my duty a little longer.

Those things which man does are stored in his mind, and become his treasures. What he does, he is said to write, because doing it writes it in the book of his life. When man has received divine truths and done them until they have instructed him into the kingdom of the heavens, his mind has become a treasury of the heavenly principles of good and truth. These he will bring forth for ever in words of wisdom and works of love.

The opposite result follows a life devoted to selfish and worldly interests.

Of every scribe instructed into the kingdom of the heavens, it is said that he brings forth out of his treasure things new and old. He is conscious of receiving life, or good and truth, perpetually from the Lord. He imparts the good and truth which he perceives within himself, with a constant and distinct acknowledgment that they are not properly of himself, and his own, but are of the Lord, and are the Lord's.

This acknowledgment is what keeps his mind in a perpetual state of reception, — a state adapted to receiving more and purer goods and truths. If he imparted any good or truth, and ascribed it to himself, he would lose as much as he imparted; he would become poorer — his treasure would be diminished — in proportion as he brought any thing forth from it, calling it his own. But giving, or putting forth from his treasure, with an acknowledgment that what he gives is from the Lord and is the Lord's, causes him to receive even more than he imparts. His treasury is continually enlarged and replenished.

Think of such a one in any state to which he attains. In that state he will put forth, or impart to others, the goods and truths which he is then receiving, and also those which he received and wrote in his book in former states. Thus he will put forth things new and old. And whether he gives new or old, there is given to him all that he can receive. "Give, and it shall be given to you : good measure,

pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom ; for with the same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

That men are made spiritually poorer by imparting good and truth, when they ascribe them to themselves, is manifest from the fact, that what they call their own ceases to be good and true in them. Nothing which we receive from the Lord is to us good and true, any further than we acknowledge it to be the Lord's, and bring it forth with that acknowledgment. Hence, nothing is a spiritual blessing to us, — nothing blesses us, or gives us spiritual life, — any farther than we acknowledge that it is of the Lord and is the Lord's. By ascribing it to ourselves, we adulterate the good, and falsify the truth, and convert the blessing into a curse.

During infancy and childhood, every person receives many goods and truths, and acknowledges, according to his capacity, that they are from the Lord, or from parents and teachers who stand in the place of the Lord. The quality of this acknowledgment varies according to age and intelligence ; but, during the earliest years, if there is the least of distinct acknowledgment of the Source of good and truth, there likewise is the least of the sin of ascribing them to ourselves.

In adult age, most men, and probably all, have some states in which they receive some good and truth with an acknowledgment that they are from the Lord. And this, added to what they received in infancy and childhood, constitutes their remains,

which are their treasures. The good and truth which they ascribe to themselves, when they receive them, do not become a part of their spiritual treasure.

Every thing good or true which any man imparts, he brings forth out of the treasure thus acquired in his mind ; and every new degree of good and truth which he receives is received into the treasury thus formed. When any of the remains of good or truth belonging to that treasure are brought into activity, that man may bring them forth in deed or word, if he looks at them within himself, and ascribes them to the Lord, and brings them forth with that acknowledgment, and continues to ascribe them to the Lord after putting them forth into deed and word, then these same goods and truths remain a part of his treasure, and they are purified and enlarged, and other goods and truths of like quality flow in from heaven, and are added to the treasure. But, if he ascribes these goods and truths to himself, when they are perceived in his mind, or after he has expressed them, he thereby denies the Lord, and perverts the good and the truth, and he loses them from his treasure.

This shows how every one's treasure may be increased and perfected, or diminished and destroyed. And let it be remembered, that to destroy the remains of good and truth already stored in the mind is to destroy the capacity of receiving new kinds and degrees of good and truth : it is to destroy all capacity to receive the kingdom of God.

Every scribe instructed into the kingdom of the

heavens is said to be like a man, a householder. He is called a *man* on account of the truths in his understanding, and a *householder* on account of the goods in his will. These goods and truths are united: he united them by doing the truths, when he stored them in his treasury, or wrote them in his book. By the same process, his will and understanding became one treasury, and good and truth one treasure.

In this treasury are goods and truths of different orders; and, as he views them within himself, the more interior classes appear new, and the more exterior appear comparatively old. But he brings forth both, because some of his neighbors are in states which require the lower degrees, and some are capable of receiving the higher. He endeavors to put forth what will be most useful, — to every one according to his several ability.

It is common among men to regard those persons as benevolent who bring forth out of their treasure only old things, — only natural good and truth, or what are serviceable to worldly life. But it will come to pass in the New Church, that those only will be regarded as friends who endeavor to impart both spiritual and natural good. Those who become truly of that church will be very different from us; for we often receive to our bosoms those who make no effort, and have no desire, that we should receive heavenly good and truth. We ally ourselves to those who would be unwilling that we should utter in their hearing the primary truths of heaven and the church.

And, when we do so, we are not in states to bring



forth out of our treasures things new and old. We content ourselves with teaching only old things; and this not because they are unwilling to receive new, but because we then agree with them in choosing the old. If it were not so, we should not and could not choose their company, and become allied to them. We could put forth old things for their temporal good, without adopting their state and becoming allied to them, and without disjoining new things and old. We have no duty to any person which requires us to come into a state in which natural things rule; and, if we keep spiritual things ruling, we shall never voluntarily place ourselves where we may not freely bring forth from our treasures things new and old, nor where we can receive only what is old. What is old, when separated from what is new, becomes dead; and, when we voluntarily receive it, we appropriate spiritual death.

When we separate natural good and truth from spiritual, and put forth only the natural, let us not imagine that we add to our spiritual treasure: we diminish it. And, if we desire to receive natural good without spiritual, we lay up treasures on the earth, and destroy our treasure in the heavens.

The New Jerusalem does not come down from God out of heaven, where old things are preferred to new; and, where it does descend, there is a new heaven and a new earth.

## SERMON XVI.

## RECEPTION OF TRUTH WITH THE NATURAL.

Matt. xiii. 53—58.—AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED THESE PARABLES, HE DEPARTED THENCE. AND, COMING INTO HIS OWN COUNTRY, HE TAUGHT THEM IN THEIR SYNAGOGUE, INSOMUCH THAT THEY WERE ASTONISHED, AND SAID, WHENCE HATH THIS MAN THIS WISDOM AND THESE POWERS? IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER'S SON; IS NOT HIS MOTHER CALLED MARY? AND HIS BRETHERN, JAMES AND Joses AND SIMON AND JUDAS, AND HIS SISTERS, ARE THEY NOT ALL WITH US? WHENCE, THEN, HATH HE ALL THESE THINGS? AND THEY WERE SCANDALIZED ON ACCOUNT OF HIM. BUT JESUS SAID, A PROPHET IS NOT WITHOUT HONOR, SAVE IN HIS OWN COUNTRY AND IN HIS OWN HOUSE. AND HE DID NOT MANY MIGHTY WORKS THERE, BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF.

THESE are the concluding words of the chapter containing the eight parables which we have already explained. The last four of the parables are spoken of as having been taught in a house, and to the disciples only. They consist of interior truths, which those alone can well comprehend, in whom several regenerating works have been wrought, and who have come into spiritual and celestial states of mind. The present text speaks of the Lord's instructions to those who had been acquainted with Him during all His life in the world.

Remember that He was the Word or divine truth in an external human form. They had seen Him from infancy as another man; and, to the idea of Him thus acquired, they could not superadd the idea that He was Immanuel. They were in the condition of those persons of the old church who have from infancy regarded the Word as containing only a literal sense. When these persons hear the wonderful truths now taught from the spiritual sense of the Word, they are scandalized; and their reasonings to prove that the Word is like other books, containing only literal truths and corresponding affections, are like those of the Jews to prove that the Lord was like other men.

The difference of state between this class of persons, and those who see the truths of the Word to be divine, is denoted by the Lord's departing from the house in which He taught the disciples, and coming into His own country. In the fifty-seventh verse it is said, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own *country* and in his own *house*;" that is, among his own family or kindred.

Speaking spiritually, man's own country is his external understanding, and his own house is his external will. In man's natural state, self-intelligence fills his understanding; and self-love, his will. All that he receives he calls his own. He acknowledges nothing above himself; and when truth and good are seen descending from heaven, he is scandalized, and contends that they are like natural good and truth.

That the Lord came into His own country, means

the state of His truth where it is seen and regarded as merely natural truth, — as such truths as men call their own reason and their own understanding. The expression, *His own country*, relates spiritually to what the Jews thought, and not to what was internally true. They thought Him to be a mere man, and that Judea was His country, as they thought divine truth was merely human, and of the world. And what is here said of His coming into His own country has reference to the coming of His truth to those who call it their self-intelligence.

The divine truth comes to persons in this state, and teaches them in their synagogue. Synagogues were the places of religious instruction among the Jews ; and hence, spiritually, a synagogue signifies doctrine. The doctrine here referred to is the doctrine of such persons concerning the Sacred Scripture, and this involves all other doctrine. We might with equal propriety say, that it is the doctrine concerning the Lord ; for those who regard the Lord as another man, or deny that he is the true God, also deny that the Word is divine. They cannot do otherwise than believe the Word to be of the same quality with the Lord the Saviour ; and if they make the one to be of their own country and their own house, so they do the other.

The Word teaches all that it can teach, and the Lord does all the saving work He can do, even among this class of men. In those who deny that the Lord is God, and that His Word is divine, He cannot do many mighty works because of their infidelity ; but they see something of His works in

others, and they cannot wholly exclude from their minds the idea which heaven and the church conspire to produce in them, that the Word has a divine meaning, and the Lord a divine life, which their doctrine denies. The power of the Word affects even them so much, that they do not rest easy in their bed, — that is, in their doctrine. Their sleep is disturbed. They dream of assaults from mighty armies. Their darkness seems peopled with evil genii.

Their uneasiness is manifested by a perpetual effort to prove that their doctrine is true, or that all true doctrines are false. The Word produces many effects which excite their astonishment; and they deem it necessary to account for all that is done in them and in others, by extolling the dignity of human nature, — by showing that man does the whole by his own reason, and not the Lord by his Word.

When any thing of spiritual truth from the Word is taught among them, they are astonished, and say, Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty powers? They have some perception that spiritual truths may be deduced from the Word; and an effort is necessary to reason away the impression. And for this they are always ready; for nothing is so destructive to all they hold dear, as the admission that the Word has any more than a natural meaning.

Hence they say, “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren, James and Joses and Simon and Judas, and His sisters, are they not all with us?” Is not this truth

from merely natural good, teaching how to do merely worldly good? Is it not born of the love of worldly life? Are not the good things which it teaches, and the affections of truth which it inculcates, of the same quality with those which are common to selfish and worldly life?

They say all this from their doctrine and their common view of the Word. And, when they have reasoned thus, they are prepared to deny that it has any spiritual meaning. This is meant by their question, "Whence, then, hath it all these things?" for this is meant as denial, and not as acknowledgment, that the Word has these things.

The grand difficulty with these persons is, that they do not and will not acknowledge any truth above their reason or self-intelligence. It must all be of their own country. They will acknowledge Jesus to be the son of Joseph and Mary, and concede to Him all the wisdom and power that are consistent with this origin; but they cannot admit that He is God-with-us, having all power in heaven and earth.

Some of them have been so impressed with the wonders of the Word, as manifested in the works of Swedenborg, that they have been almost ready to admit their reality, on one condition, viz. that they might ascribe them to Swedenborg, and not to the Lord. If they might ascribe the truths of the New Church to Swedenborg's own reason, then they would be the countrymen of their own self-intelligence, and might be applied in the same manner; but if they must be admitted to be of another country,

even from heaven, they are our masters, and not our servants. But they find that the heavenly truths taught in these writings wholly refuse to be of their country and their house ; and therefore they reject them.

That the divine truth cannot do many mighty works among people of this character is very obvious. They do not admit its authority over them, but only its equality with them ; and this acknowledgment of truth as an equal always has, concealed within it, such a denial of the sovereignty of divine truth as makes it a mere servant. And then it cannot operate over man and within him to perform its proper works. It cannot heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils, nor raise the dead. It cannot even open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf. It cannot truly begin the work of regeneration, because of their infidelity.

All these remarks may be thought to apply very well to the Jews, and to some of our neighbors ; but, if we mistake not, they disclose the most prevalent sin among ourselves. We have had the Word with us from our earliest years as a familiar acquaintance. We have treated its truth as we have treated the rational truths of men. Most of us always believed that it contained more truth than any other book ; but none of us ever thought that it was the only fountain of truth. Recently we have become convinced, that it contains incomparably more truth than we formerly supposed ; but this does not imply that the Word has gained its proper place in our minds.

Do we acknowledge and treat the Word as divine

truth from God out of heaven, or do we make it to be of our own country? It is quite time, my brethren, that we were able to give a favorable answer to this question. We have had instruction enough, so that no very scandalous deficiencies ought to appear, if our conduct in respect to common religious duties be scrutinized. But how will it bear examination? What will it tell in respect to our belief in the Word of God?

If the Word has acquired its proper rank in our minds, then it rules there as king, with undisputed dominion; we yield to it full and implicit obedience. It is our one Master, the Christ; and, when we know what it commands, we set up no opinion or principle of action against it, but proceed immediately to do it.

The Word teaches that we ought to keep the Sabbath holy, and devote it to the spiritual duties of public and private worship, religious instruction and meditation, and works of spiritual charity. If any one who knows this devotes the holy time to secular labors, he acts against the Word. And, in that case, he makes something of his own self-intelligence the rule of his conduct. And the same is true when he is detained from public worship by a state of health or of the weather which would not prevent his exposing himself equally to perform the most important natural duties. When for trifling causes we can neglect our spiritual duties, we do not give to the divine truth its proper authority in our minds: we serve another master.

The Word teaches the duty of receiving the sacra-



ments of baptism and the holy supper. What can keep any one from them, but the operation of something in the mind which has more authority there than the Word? Many make the following acknowledgment: "I know that the Word teaches that this is my duty; but"—But what, my friend? If you know it to be your duty, say no more.

The Word teaches that it is our duty to sing praises unto the Lord, and pray unto him. If we voluntarily neglect these duties, something else besides the Word, and opposed to the Word, directs our conduct.

These examples might be extended indefinitely; and under each head some persons might find themselves convicted of obeying some law opposed to the law of God. And this shows, that, when divine truths enter our minds, we treat them as we do the opinions of men. We place them on a level with our own opinions. Sometimes we do them, and sometimes we lay them aside in the mind, and conclude to do some other things first. We set our own reason above them, and make it the judge whether and when, and how far, it is best to do them. We make them to be of our own country and our own house, and therefore they receive no true honor. We treat them as on a level with our own opinions, and as if they were to be done only when we have adopted them as our opinions. Even when we acknowledge them to be the best things that we can do, we reserve to ourselves the right and liberty of doing or not doing them, and of choosing our own time and mode of doing them. Thus, before doing

them, we appropriate them as our own self-intelligence, and then we do not obey them as the Lord's commandments.

When the kingdom of God is established within us, it will no longer be doubtful, when a truth is clearly taught, whether it will be obeyed. It will be done so far as it is understood. A teacher will not need to teach the same degree of any truth many times to the same persons. Having made one degree of any truth intelligible, he may rest assured it will immediately be done, and may proceed to other truths, or to higher degrees of the same.

The case is now different. That a truth has been plainly taught, and has been seen and acknowledged to be a truth, affords little ground of confidence that it will be obeyed. It must be repeated; and the repetition often produces vexation, and sometimes enmity. It may be useful to explain why persons are apt to be displeased, when truths which have not been done are often repeated.

When we hear a truth and understand it, and receive it into remains of good which had been stored in the mind, then the affections of those remains lead us to do it; and, when we have done it, those remains are confirmed as our own active principles, and the good which was in the truth is also received, and becomes a part of our love. All the good which is thus received loves the truth by which it was received; and, if that truth be preached a thousand times, the mind has delight in hearing it, and embraces it as a tried and faithful friend.

But when a truth is taught and understood, and

some of our evils and falsities are permitted to rise up and cast it down among the external things of our own country and our own house, and we refuse to do it, and proceed to do what is opposed to it, — then we receive, increase, and confirm the evil opposed to that truth, as we acquire and confirm good by doing it. And, after we have thus rejected and cast down the truth, if the preacher repeats it, and endeavors to raise it up to its proper authority in the mind, the evils and falsities which had cast it down are displeased. Their government is invaded; and, in their defence, they make us say that we knew that truth well enough before, and there was no occasion for repeating it; that it is infringing on our freedom to press it upon us; and they cause us to contend that it ought not to have any more power in the mind than we please to give it.

No teacher can be long tolerated, and the truth which he teaches cannot do many mighty works, where the people thus receive it as of their own country and their own house. Even if many truths are learned and done, and thereby much good is received, yet, if there are a few plain truths which many do not endeavor to do, the repetition of them will produce soreness and vexation of mind; and all other truths will operate with far less power in the mind, and give far less good, than if these few were obeyed. The evils and falsities which control the mind so far as to make it refuse or delay to obey these few known truths, will raise up evil thoughts and feelings against any teacher who holds them up as mocked, scourged, and crucified divine truths.

Even if they make great efforts to bear with his preaching, and to think favorably of it, and to profit by many things it imparts, they are every moment in danger of being scandalized, while they claim the right to refuse or delay obedience to any truth which they see to be a truth, and to cast it down from the sovereign authority which it asserts, and call it of their own country and their own house.

When Pilate said to Jesus, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above." The case is the same with those who claim the right or power to do as they please with the divine truth when it is preached to them. The Lord Himself gave Pilate this power, that he might act as a free agent in his treatment of the Lord. But Pilate was accountable for his use of this power, and he could not innocently employ it in crucifying the Lord.

When a truth is communicated to us, we feel that we have power to do with it as we please. We regard that power as inherent in ourselves, and think that, as it is ours, we may use it as we please. We say we have a right to use it as we please, and we mean that we may do so innocently. But this is a fearful mistake. It is the truth itself that gives us all the power we have to do or to reject the truth. The truth itself gives us power to treat the truth as free agents; and we are responsible for our use of this power. As Pilate could not innocently employ his power against the Lord, no more can we innocently

employ ours against the truth. The cases are absolutely the same. Every man has within his own mind a Pilate; and, when we reason in favor of our *right* to treat the truth as we please, we should give Pilate credit for our argument.

Truth comes to us as our sovereign and our God. It concedes not that we have any right but what it gives us; and that is only the right of doing what it teaches.

The truth can perform its proper works in us and by us, only so far as we submit all things in our own minds to its authority, and obey it,—only so far as we forsake all, and follow it. It cannot acknowledge our sovereignty over it, even when we threaten to crucify it. It does, indeed, give us power to treat it as we will; but, if we debase it to the level of things in our own country and our own house, it will not do many mighty works there, because of our unbelief.

---













BX  
8724  
W

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 022 216 767 A